

LYDGATE'S FALL OF PRINCES

EDITED BY
HENRY BERGEN

PART I.
(BOOKS I. AND II.)



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LYDGATE'S FALL OF PRINCES

PART I.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE, THE METRE, BOCCACCIO'S
AND LAURENCE'S PREFACES, Etc.

BOOKS I. AND II.

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ERRATA

- On page 174, line 6172, *patisynge* is a more correct reading than *paryschyng*.
- On page 426, line 3514, for *Lacedemonios*, read *Lacedemonois*.
- On page 815, line 1453, for *impreuable* read *imprenable*.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It was probably not long after May 1431 that Lydgate began his "Fall of Princes,"¹ at the request of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who was lieutenant and warden of England from April 1430 to early January 1432 during the absence of Henry VI. in France.² The mention of Gloucester's prowess against heretics (Prologue, 400-413) no doubt refers, as Miss Hammond has suggested,³ to the suppression of the Lollard risings at Oxford, Salisbury and London in the spring of 1431, and perhaps to Gloucester's presence "at the beheading, at Oxford, of a small band of men led by the bailiff of Abingdon," in May 1431.⁴ We do not know the date of the completion of the work, but as Lydgate complains of his age, "more than three score years," in Book VIII. (he was sixty-five in 1436), and was engaged on the "Life of Albon and

¹ There has been confusion in regard to the title of the book: some students write "falls" and others "fall"; one or two have on occasion used both forms. Tottel's title-page seems to have been responsible for the plural, as Wayland printed "tragedies" in his title and "fall" in the heading of the table of contents, and Pynson "fall" (falle) in the titles and colophons of both his editions. Among others who have followed Tottel are Thomas Arnold, Henry Morley, Ten Brink, Koerting, Schick (who prefers "fallés"), A. W. Ward, Courthope, Saintsbury, and Lee (art. Lydgate, Dict. Nat. Biog.). G. Ellis, Hazlitt's Warton, Taine, David Laing, Hortis, MacCracken, Miss Hammond, the Dict. Nat. Biog. (art. Humphrey of Gloucester), and practically all catalogues of MSS., including Ward, have "fall." R. Lane Poole prints "falls" on p. 229 of his edition of Bale, Oxford, 1902, and "fall" on pp. 228 and 231; E. Gordon Duff, "falls" in Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., II. 321, and "fall" elsewhere in his bibliographical works. Earlier writers, such as William Baldwyn (preface to "Mirror of Magistrates," ed. 1563), and Edward Phillips (*Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum*, ed. Brydges, 1800), and Thomas Gray have "fall"; Watt quotes "falls" from Tottel; but Tottel himself printed "fall" in the heading of his table of contents and in the colophon, fol. ccxviii verso. I have used "fall" because there is no doubt that Lydgate himself called his book "The Fall of Princes." He refers directly to it in lines VI. 304 and IX. 3622, and in the same terms to Boccaccio's original, I. 51, 77, 270, 471; III. 133, VI. 231, and to Chaucer's "Monk's Tale" of the same title, I. 249 and IX. 3422. He also used "fall" as a subject of general interest (in reference to the opinions of Andalus di Nigri), III. 174. "Fallys" he uses once as a subject of general interest, IX. 3450, and, so far as I have been able to discover, four times in reference to the the "fallis" of specific princes.

² Prologue, 372 ff. ³ *Anglia*, 38. 133-136. ⁴ *Anglia*, loc. cit.

Amphabel" in 1439, it is quite possible that, as Professor Schick conjectures, it was finished in 1438 or 1439,¹ perhaps before the end of 1438; and there was at least a partial interruption in 1433, while Lydgate was engaged in writing the "Legend of St. Edmund and Fremund" at the command of Abbot William Curteys, during and after a visit of Henry VI. to St. Edmund's Bury, which lasted from Christmas 1432 to Easter 1433.²

The "Fall of Princes" consists of 36,365 lines of decasyllabic verse arranged in seven and eight line stanzas,³ rhyming *ababbcc* (rhyme royal) and *ababbcbc*, and is a paraphrase of *Des Cas des Nobles Hommes et Femmes*, Laurence de Premierfait's second, amplified version in French prose of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*.⁴ The original Latin prose work was written by Boccaccio between 1355 and 1360 and dedicated to his friend, the chevalier Mainardo dei Cavalcanti, because "no emperor, king, prince or pope" seemed to him worthy of his regard; and although a revised and somewhat augmented edition was issued at a later date (probably before 1374), we are here concerned with the earlier text, which is the one Laurence used in making his translation.⁵

The *De Casibus* might, as Henri Cochin suggests,⁶ be called a history of Fortune; for it is a collection gathered throughout the centuries describing the most memorable and crushing

¹ Temple of Glas, p. cvii.

² Legend of St. Edmund and Fremund, I. 187 ff. Temple of Glas, p. cvi.

³ There are but few eight-line stanzas. See the Envoys on Arsinoë, Antiochus, the Scipios, Herod, and Charles of Anjou; the Chapite of Fortune; the Last Envoy, addressed to Humphrey, and the Words of the Translator to his Book (IV. 3445, V. 1590, 1846, VII. 246, IX. 2017, 3239, 3541, 3589).

⁴ We sometimes meet with the title, *De Casibus Virorum et Fœminarum Illustrium*; but as Paul Durrieu has pointed out in his *Le Boccace de Munich*, Munich, 1909, p. 19, the word *virorum* was used in the general sense of "human beings," or, as we say, "people." (Parmi les écrits latins de Boccace, celui qui eut de beaucoup la plus grande notoriété fut le traité intitulé *De Casibus virorum illustrium*, le mot *casibus* répondant à la vieille expression française *cas*, signifiant vicissitude de fortune, et le mot *virorum* étant entendu dans le sens général de genre humain, ce qui fait que le titre *De Casibus virorum illustrium* est devenu, dans le français du XV^e siècle, *Des Cas des nobles hommes et femmes*.)

⁵ See Henri Hauvette, *Boccace, Étude Biographique et Littéraire*, Paris, 1914, pp. 391 and 393, note. Also the chapter on *Les Œuvres Latines*, pp. 389, 396 and 347 ff.

⁶ Henri Cochin, *Boccace, Études Italiennes*, Paris, 1889, p. 122.

blows dealt by fate to the illustrious personages of mythology and history, and written, as the author himself said,¹ with the object of teaching princes the virtue of wisdom and moderation by holding up to them the example of misfortunes provoked by egotism, pride and inordinate ambition.² The form is the familiar one of a vision or dream, the author representing himself at work in his study, while the "famous unfortunates" pass before him in succession, and each tells the story of his fall. Some are presented to Boccaccio by the goddess Fortuna as those to whom she had at one time shown her favour and afterwards thrown from her wheel; others enter unannounced and clamour to be allowed to speak; and there are several who take part in excited conversations with one another or with the author, as in the chapters on Atreus and Thyestes; Messalina, Tiberius and Caligula; and Brunhilde. Occasionally, Boccaccio himself contributes a tale by way of illustration, and several stories are told by Fortuna;³ and the work is filled with ironical remarks on the vicious stupidity of those to whom fate has given power over the lives of their fellow men. The Latin book is more dramatic and of greater literary value than either Laurence's or Lydgate's translation. The dedicatory epistle to Mainardo dei Cavalcanti, written in 1363,⁴ and Boccaccio's preface were translated by Laurence, but the former appears as such only in his first and more literal version; and although he worked parts of it into the preface of his second version, very little was preserved by Lydgate, who also omitted the long dedication by Laurence to the Duke of Berry.

At the present day Boccaccio is known best as the earliest and greatest master of Italian prose, as the author of charming lyrical poems and interludes, and of the first heroic epic in the language; he is hardly known at all as the moralist, historian and man of science of the prose Latin works, *De Genealogia Deorum*, *De Claris Mulieribus*, *De Montibus*, and *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, all of which were compiled or written during the latter part of his life. The history and natural

¹ See Boccaccio's preface, "*Exquirenti mei*," etc., p. xlvii. below.

² Comp. Boccaccio's preface and Hauvette, *loc. cit.*, p. 347.

³ See the beginning (first few hundred lines) of Book VI.

⁴ See Hauvette, p. 392.

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science of the fourteenth century have little interest for us now except as antiquarians; the moral and political doctrines of *De Casibus* are commonplace and could hardly have been considered very remarkable even at the time they were written, and its art, in spite of its dramatic form and the power of its bitter satire, is not distinguished enough to hold it above the level of the books that perish for all but a few curious students and collectors. But from the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth century the case was very different. Although the Decameron had been translated into French by Laurence in 1411, there was no public then capable either of comprehending its historical importance or appreciating its style; and the indelicacy of a few of its stories, no greater than that of many other popular tales of the time, was certainly not such as to cause any great commotion except in ecclesiastical circles, outraged far less by indecency than by the satire of the priesthood. So it was inevitable that, as far as his contemporaries and immediate successors were concerned, Boccaccio's fame as a writer should rest chiefly on his Latin works; and it was as a moralist and man of profound learning that he was best known and respected. To judge by the number of existing manuscripts, the *De Casibus* had an exceedingly large circulation. It was the sort of book that would especially appeal to the great personages of the time: it told about people just like themselves; and although very naturally it taught them nothing—as if the impulses and desires of men were controlled by either precept or example—it at any rate interested them. They were all exposed to the vicissitudes of fortune, and, the world being then very much as it is to-day, many of them became victims of the same disasters that had afflicted and destroyed their predecessors;¹ and it was no doubt a source

¹ En plus d'une occasion, dans les deux cents années qui ont suivi la composition de cet ouvrage, le *De Casibus* a pu servir de réconfort moral à des malheureux. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, nous savons qu'au XV^e siècle le duc Charles d'Orléans, retenu prisonnier en Angleterre, se fit envoyer pour charmer les loisirs de sa captivité un exemplaire du traité de Boccace. — Durrieu, *loc. cit.*, pp. 20, 21, who refers to Léopold Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris, 1868-1881, I. p. 106. Even in the middle of the sixteenth century, Hieronymus Ziegler, editor and translator of the *De Casibus*, an able man and no pedant, wrote, "Ich habe nie etwas gelesen was mehr Vergnügen und Belehrung gewährt."—Marcus Landau, *Boccaccio*, Stuttgart, 1877, p. 218.

of consolation to some of them, when their hour of trial came, to read about the tribulations of others. And as many of these great people were unable to read Latin, it is quite evident that Laurence was certain of a large and influential public for his translation.

Laurence,¹ who took his name from the village of Premier-fait near Arcis-sur-Aube, was clerk of the diocese of Troyes, a competent writer in French and a Latin scholar, and in the eyes of his contemporaries a poet and orator of distinction. He seems to have made his living chiefly by translating, and his first and more literal version of *De Casibus* was finished on November 13, 1400, and dedicated to Duke Louis of Bourbon. At about this time he became a confidential advisor and clerk to Jean Chantepreme, conseiller du roi de France. In 1405 he translated Cicero's *De Senectute* into French for Duke Louis of Bourbon. Between 1405 and 1409 he translated *De Amicitia* and completed his second version of *De Casibus*² for the Duke of Berry while living in the house of Bureau de Dammartin, trésorier de France. During the years 1411-14 he translated the Decameron, and in 1417 Aristotle's Economics; a version of Martin Dumiense's *De quatuor virtutibus* is also attributed to him. He died in Paris in 1418, "année terrible de massacres, d'épidémie et de misère," and was buried in the Cimetière des Innocents.³

Of Laurence's first version there are but few manuscripts⁴ and only two printed editions, that of Colard Mansion, Bruges, 1476, and the Lyons edition of 1483. Considering the attitude of translators of his time to their originals, it is a comparatively complete and straightforward rendering, and

¹ For the above details in regard to Laurence I am indebted to A. Hortis, *Studi sulle opere latine del Boccaccio*, Trieste, 1879, p. 618 ff.; Durrieu, *loc. cit.*, p. 19 ff. See also Hauvette, *De Laurentio de Primofato* (thesis), Paris, 1903, and *Recherches sur le "De Casibus virorum illustrium" de Boccace*, Paris, 1901 (*Extrait du volume "Entre camarades" publié par la Société des anciens élèves de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris*).

² Cy fine le liure de Jehan Boccace des cas des nobles hommes et femmes translate de latin en francois par moy laurens de premierfait clerck du diocese de troies et fut compie ceste translacion le XV^e jour d'auril mil IIII et IX. Cest assauoir le lundi apres pasques.—Various MSS. Some add the word "closes" to "pasques."

³ Durrieu, p. 21.

⁴ In the British Museum, Additional 11,696 and Harley 621.

includes Boccaccio's dedicatory epistle to Mainardo dei Cavalcanti. In his second version Laurence enlarged his earlier work, extending it to more than double its original length by the addition of geographical and historical notes and explanations, interpolating all manner of odd pieces of information from the books he had read — Justin, Florus, Livy, Vincent, Valerius Maximus and others — with the result that much of the dramatic form and power of the original is lost. Although he omitted Boccaccio's epistle to Mainardo, he nevertheless used parts of it as material for his own preface, and added a long dedication to the Duke of Berry, in which he discussed the question of man's relation to fortune, the abuses of the church and priesthood, the conduct of the nobility and the condition of the agricultural labourers.¹

As Durrieu points out, the work thus transformed became for the French reader "not only a subject for moral discussions and a suitable guidance for the restoration of courage in adversity, but a collection of facts and anecdotes, of curious information about countries and men, and almost a picture in perspective of universal history from Adam and Eve up to the middle of the fourteenth century." It was considered to be an original work rather than a translation, and its success was great. Copied and recopied many times during the entire fifteenth century, it was printed in Paris by Jean du Pré in 1483, in the next year for Antoine Vêrard, again for Vêrard (n. d., but after 1503), by Michel le Noir in 1515, by Nicolas Couteau in 1538, and finally superseded by a new version by Claude Witart, which appeared in 1578. Magnificent manuscript copies² were in the possession of the last dukes of the house of Burgundy, from Jean sans Peur to Charles le Téméraire, of Jacques d'Armagnac, duke of Nemours, le Grand bâtard de Bourgogne, Queen Charlotte of Savoy, wife of

¹ See p. liv. ff.

² See Paulin Paris, *Les Manuscrits Français de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, Paris, 1836-38; Léopold Delisle, *Le Cabinet des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale (Nationale)*, Paris, 1868-81; Hortis, *loc. cit.*, p. 933-938. The manuscripts of Laurence's second version in the British Museum are Royal 18. D. VII., Royal 20. C. IV., Royal 14. E. V., Add. 18,750 and Add. 35,321, of which the last mentioned has been described by Sir Edward Maunde Thompson in the *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. VII. (1905), pp. 198-210, with reproductions of six half-page miniatures.

Louis XI., Louis' sister, Jeanne de France, duchess of Bourbon, his illegitimate daughter, Jeanne, countess of Rousillon, Jean d'Orléans, count of Angoulême (grandfather of Francis I.), Louise of Savoy (mother of Francis I.), Catherine d'Alençon, Henry VII. of England, and many others.¹ A beautifully illuminated codex was presented to the Duke of Berry towards the end of 1410 by Martin de Gouges, bishop of Chartres,² and there is a manuscript in the National Library, Munich (described by Durrieu in the work already referred to), with many large miniatures attributed to Jean Foucquet (1415-1485), the most distinguished French painter of the fifteenth century.

The Duke of Berry,³ for whom Laurence translated the *De Casibus* and *Decameron*, was born November 30, 1340, third son of king John II. In 1356 he was created Count of Poitiers and made king's lieutenant in southern France, and later on received the province of Languedoc. He suppressed a revolt of the peasants with barbaric severity, collected a fine of £15,000 from the states of the province, fought against the Flemings at Rosebeke in 1382, was active in suppressing the Parisian revolts, and by his bungling and procrastination is said to have caused the failure of a naval expedition planned against England in 1386. In 1389 Charles VI. went to Languedoc to investigate his uncle's government, with the result that the duke was disgraced and his agent Bétisac burnt. And although he was restored in 1401, he did not dare show himself in the province, but delegated his authority to Bernard d'Armagnac. He died in Paris, June 15, 1416, "leaving vast treasures of jewelry, objects of art, and especially of illuminated MSS., many of which have been preserved."⁴

¹ Comp. Durrieu, p. 24.

² Hortis, *loc. cit.*, p. 621.

³ See L. Raynal, *Histoire du Berry*, Bourges, 1845.

⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article on the Duke of Berry. Hiver de Beauvoir says in his *La Librairie de Jean Duc de Berry au Château de Meubun-sur-Yèvre*, Paris, 1860, p. 1, "Jean, duc de Berry, frère de Charles V, fut le prince le plus magnifique de son temps, s'inquiétant peu des moyens dès qu'il s'agissait de bâtir, et surtout d'amasser des reliquaires et des bijoux d'église, pour lesquels sa passion alla jusqu'à a manie." And in Léopold Delisle, *loc. cit.*, I. p. 58, we read, "On savait partout, en France et même à l'étranger, le bonheur que le duc de Berry éprouvait à posséder des livres et la munificence avec laquelle il récompensait les cadeaux qui lui étaient faits. Aussi s'empressait-on de lui offrir des volumes dont la beauté devait flatter les plus délicats des bibliophiles du XIV^e et du XV^e siècle."

He was fiercely satirized in *Le Songe véritable*, an anonymous pamphlet of the fifteenth century, for, as Henri Moranvillé tells us, in order to satisfy his expensive tastes, "le duc de Berry, dans les lieutenances royales qui-lui furent confiées, n'hésita jamais à accabler d'exactions de tous genres les populations soumises, bien malgré elles, à son autorité. Aussi la réputation de ce prince était-elle exécration de son temps; on n'ignorait point ses goûts dispendieux et on les haïssait, parce qu'on en souffrait cruellement. . . . Après lui avoir retiré très justement la lieutenance en Languedoc à la suite de scandales financiers, où Bétisac avait payé pour son maître, on avait eu le tort de la lui rendre. Aussi, n'ayant plus de frein, dépensait-il énormément, ruinant le domaine, absorbant le revenu des aides; l'argent fondait littéralement entre ses mains et enrichissait d'indignes favoris. Froissart a raconté qu'il s'était pris d'une inexplicable affection pour un tailleur de chausses; le *Songe véritable* parle d'un paveur."¹

Laurence's long dedication, in which he expresses his indignation aroused by the abuses of the church, the bad behaviour of the nobility and the sufferings of the agricultural labourers, must have had a peculiar interest for the Duke of Berry; although it is quite probable that he read it much as it pleases one to think that the good Duke Humphrey, who appears to have been equally egoistic, avaricious, untrustworthy, intriguing and dissolute, read Lydgate's gravely offered moral and political wisdom, with serious and wholly detached interest. It is an irony of Boccaccio's fate that the translations of his *De Casibus* should have been dedicated to two such men. It is also obvious that both the French and the English versions differed greatly from the original, no less in spirit than in style. As already mentioned, Boccaccio's book was not only more dramatic and concise, but, in spite of its pretentious and artificial manner, which was fashionable at the time, a far more powerful and able work, the work of a great man. The chief effect of Laurence's remarkable capacity for making interpolations was only to impair the literary value of the original, however much it may have added to its interest for con-

¹ Henri Moranvillé, *Le Songe véritable*, pamphlet politique d'un parisien du XV^e siècle. In *Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*, Vol. XVII. (1890), Paris, 1891, p. 227.

temporary readers; and Lydgate, his translator, suffering under the same inability to let well enough alone, might have made matters still worse had it not been for his choice of verse instead of prose, his echoes of Chaucer, and the occasional intrusion of his by no means unsympathetic personality. As it is, Lydgate's version is very superior to that of Laurence and can at least be looked upon as the work of one who, had he written less, might have been an artist, an implication into which there was never any danger of Laurence's falling.¹

In regard to the spirit of the three authors, especially their reaction to their environments, it can be said with reasonable certainty that Laurence was not much of an idealist or very distinguished intellectually: he added no original thought to the work, except perhaps his prefaced plea for the agricultural labourers, who, as we know, were so badly treated as to endanger their efficiency; and if this plea was the utterance of a kind heart, as no doubt it was, rather than an expression of precocious utilitarianism, nevertheless his loyalty and reverence for the great personages of the day were no less unquestioned than his approval of the social and political system under which they lived; and his willingness to kick the dead lions of the past, after Boccaccio had kicked them, both dead and alive, hardly betrayed a disposition to rashness. Still, he did not hesitate to condemn in general terms what he considered wrong, and took advantage of every occasion to lament the tyranny and avarice of the feudal lords, laity and ecclesiastics, and the unhappy condition of the people; and although he appears occasionally to have reproved the nobility (without being too specific), his tone is moderate, supplicating, seldom admonitory; his wish was to serve and instruct, and he never grew weary of telling his princes that neither their position nor their lives would be secure unless they were willing

¹ "Tuttochè il Lydgate modestamente si contentasse d'essere tenuto per traduttore del *Premierfait*, il suo lavoro può dirsi opera originale. Egli aveva anima da poeta, e lo manifesta già l'ardito pensiero di tradurre in versi un' opera di prosa. Da poeta, egli modifica, come più gli torna, l'ordine de' capitoli, e allarga e ravviva il testo francese, abbastanza prosaico, che gli sta dinanzi. Un concetto filosofico egli abbellisce con leggiadre similitudini tolte per lo più da' fiori o dalle gemme; le storie e le leggende rende piacevoli con particolarità immaginose, poetiche," etc. — Hortis, p. 649.

to defend the people and preserve them in their well-being and safety.¹

Boccaccio studied his princes from a wholly different point of view. They were to him objects of hostility and bitter scorn, for whom he had neither sympathy nor respect.² As he said in his dedicatory Epistle to Mainardo, there was none living, pope, emperor, or king, to whom he cared to dedicate his book. They made him sick.³ And he believed that as a result of their luxury, magnificence and pride, their avarice, idleness and licentiousness, their hatred of one another and desire for revenge, all honesty, justice and virtue were lost, and that by the example of their superiors the people were contaminated and led into evil customs.⁴ So he wrote, hoping to bring the erring to the right path, to suppress vices, to arouse the indolent from their slumber, and to incite all men

¹ Hortis, p. 627.

² Qualiter hoc faciant principes hodierni, viderit Deus. In Tyrannidem versi sunt regii mores, et despecta impotentia subditorum: auro, gemmisque splendere uolunt, longo seruiuntium ordine circumdari, palatia in excelsum erigere, grege pellicum, et histrionum, deformi sodalicio oblectari: obscœnitatibus aures complere, conuiuia in longissimam noctem deducere, ebrietatibus, atque ignominiosis libidinibus vacare, dies in somnos profundissimos perdere, populos in suam salutem uigiles permanere: et bella non iure, sed iniuria sumere, magnificum arbitrantur: consilia proborum respuere, sibi tantum credere: bonos deprimere, improbos extollere: ciuitates vectigalibus onerare, ciues torquere, in exilium agere, trucidare, & luti more calce calcare. O scelestum malum, O prædonum, lurconumque, ne regum dicam, inhonesta, & horrenda facinora. O longa, immo vecors patientia populorum, & stolidi confidentia dominorum, si putent, dum talia peragunt, à populis sibi obsequi cum fide. Quæso cum videam eum, cui honorem meum, libertatem, maiestatem, officium, præminentiam omnem concessi: cui obsequium iussus impendo, cui desudo, cuius substantias meas imparcior, cuius in salutem sanguinem effundo meum, in extenuationem, desolationem, vituperium, & perniciem inuigilare meam: sanguinem sitire, haurire, emungere, inhonestis fœminis, & perditissimis quibuscunque hominibus prodige facultates (quibus sustentare egenos, et miserabiles debuerant) effundere, atque disperdere: & in consilium niti pessimum, & pessimis operibus delectari: ac circa salutem publicam segnem, torpentem, desidemque video, regem dicam? principem colam? tamquam domino fidem seruabo? absit. Hostis est, in hunc coniurare, arma capessere, insidias tendere, vires opponere magnanimi est, sanctissimum est, & omnino necessarium. Cum nulla fere deo sit acceptior hostia Tyranni sanguine: durum quippe, & importabile pro meritis iniuriarum reportare. Recalcitrent quantum libet reges, si centies negent, regnant tamen suffragio populorum, eorumque vires illos formidabiles faciunt. Quasi minus iuste cædibus, aut iniuriis extenuent, suum sentient confestum diminutum imperium.— *De Caribus*, II. 5, *In Superbos*, from Hieronymus Ziegler's edition, Augsburg, 1544.

³ See Epistle to Mainardo.

⁴ Comp. Boccaccio's preface.

to virtue; but unlike Laurence and Lydgate, he wrote not for the personal advantage of the princes, for whose benefit his translators believed their subjects existed, but for the welfare of the community.¹

Boccaccio was also responsible for an attack on women in the eighteenth chapter of Book II., *In Mulieres*, which deserves more than passing reference. We know that invectives and satires of women were especially popular during the Middle Ages. Stories, many of them of oriental origin, such as were included in collections like the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Petrus Alfonsi (baptised in 1106), the influence of asceticism, of sentiments similar to those expressed in the latter part of the third chapter of Isaiah, and of writers like the thirteenth century Franciscan, Brother Jacopone da Todi,² whose *Lauda viii.*, "O femene, guardate," is still delightful to read, helped to create an atmosphere in which Boccaccio found himself even more at home than Guido delle Colonne, author of the "Troy Book," had been a century earlier. For towards the end of 1354, a few years before the *De Casibus* was begun, he at the age of forty-one was most unkindly rebuffed and ridiculed by a young widow to whom he had been imprudent enough to write declaring his affection. At first, as Hauvette tells the story, he was overcome with mortification, and fancied that he could see the passers-by pointing their fingers at him in the street — he could even hear their smothered laughter — for the rebuff had included personal remarks of a gross nature, and he was grey and precociously stout; but as time went on his mortification gave way to anger, which, according to

¹ "Il Boccaccio, cittadino di una libera repubblica, da lungo dimentico del feudalismo, aveva co' propri occhi veduto il mal governo de' principi d' allora, e la cacciata di uno che aveva tentato di farsi tiranno in Firenze. Dallo studio amoroso e intelligente dell'artichità latina egli aveva acquistato un modo di pensare democratico e pagano, che s'accordava mirabilmente col suo amore d'indipendenza. Il Premierfait legge tutti gli autori, ma de' profani e classici s'appropria le notizie, non il modo di pensare. I suoi libri erano chiesti e letti dai principi; ma nelle opere del Boccaccio, più spesso che panegirici, i principi potevano leggere la propria satira." — Hortis, p. 626.

² For Brother Jacopone, see two admirable articles in the "Times Literary Supplement" of April 15 and December 23, 1920. The *Lauda* have been edited by Giovanni Ferri and published by the *Società Filologica Romana*, Rome, 1910, as well as in the series *Scrittori d'Italia*, Bari, 1915, and there are translations, together with the texts, of many of them in Evelyn Underhill's "Jacopone da Todi," London, 1919.

Hauvette, "fut très vif, et se manifesta tout d'abord par un immense désir de vengeance." So he sat down and wrote his *Corbaccio*, an unimaginative and unpleasantly interesting book, and was apparently still very angry when he wrote the *In Mulieres* chapter of the *De Casibus*, in which, returning to the same subject, he presents us with another instructive, if one-sided, description of the artifices employed for various purposes by the women of fashion of his time. However, as we have seen, he did not spare the men, nor, for that matter, did Brother Jacopone; their blows were equitably distributed.

The attitude of Lydgate to his surroundings, and especially to his princes, was quite different from that of either Boccaccio or Laurence. Although always ready to counsel and advise, and, when he considered it necessary, to admonish, he was never rude, like Boccaccio, nor servile, like Laurence, but wrote throughout as a man of the world, an aristocrat and courtier, whose contempt for the political capacity of the people was exceeded only by Boccaccio's scorn for the political and moral accomplishments of their sovereigns. He omitted most of Boccaccio's censure of the clerics, which Laurence had allowed to remain in his versions, and showed himself by his fierceness to heretics much less tolerant in religious matters than the great Italian. Neither foolish nor ill-bred enough to take his "manly and wise" patron to task for his infidelities and excesses, he nevertheless stood out firmly enough for the domestic virtues and did not hesitate to tell princes, at least in the abstract, to lead sober, industrious lives and to set aside their concubines.¹ Murder, poison, bloodthirstiness and tyranny (p. 310), deceit (p. 323), dishonesty (p. 416), slander and hasty belief in it (p. 126), pride (pp. 38, 170), suspicion, ingratitude (p. 655), bad behaviour to the church (p. 278), covetousness (p. 432), and vulgar materialism (p. 399), are among the things which he mentions with special reprobation in his envoys.

In spite of his expressed opinion that the people were there chiefly for the personal advantage of their rulers,² he nevertheless believed that if a man of humble origin is ordained by God to be a king he will succeed in overcoming the resistance of all earthly princes;³ for nobility is by the grace of God and

¹ Pp. 299, 360.

² Comp., for example, I. 1393.

³ See the stories of Nimrod, I. 1282, and Cyrus, III. 2962.

not by blood, and poverty is no bar to royalty; nor can anything good ever come of an evil stock. His attitude towards women remains the same as it was in the "Troy Book:" some of Boccaccio's remarks he leaves out; for others he apologises. It must be remembered, however, that Boccaccio also qualified his apparently sweeping assertions, and that not only the sentiments expressed on pages 188 and 189, but the very words, are his as well as Lydgate's. An old and not very brilliant jest on marriage makes its appearance apropos of the story of Orpheus; but it evidently pleased Lydgate and his readers (the lines are marked in approval in several MSS.), just as Dr. Thomas Lisle's version is said to have pleased Benjamin Franklin, and, as we have reason to believe, it pleases certain of the public to-day.¹

Although Lydgate's work was much admired by his contemporaries and immediate successors and enjoyed at least one hundred and fifty years of popularity, no one in more recent times, so far as I am aware, except Thomas Gray in his "Remarks," who was hardly enthusiastic, and Mrs. Browning,² who approved of him for other than purely aesthetic reasons, has given him much praise as an artist. A writer who usually contrives to spoil even his most felicitous passages before he has done with them, who systematically pads out his lines with stock phrases and rhyme-tags, and pours out unending streams of verse during apparently the whole of a very long life, cannot well be taken seriously as one of the great poets. We search his works in vain for evidence either of imagination or originality, of sympathetic insight into character, sensibility, delicacy of feeling or a fine instinct for form; nor is he distinguished for more purely intellectual qualities. On occasion he shows that he has power and rises to a sombre dignity of manner, well seen in parts of the "Fall of Princes"³ and in the *Daunce of Machabree*, and this, together with a strain of melancholy, which was in the air at the time and a few years later inspired François Villon to his finest

¹ For Dr. Thomas Lisle and "The Power of Music," see "The London Mercury," Vol. V., p. 295. For a modern instance, see the "At Random" column of "The Observer," February 27, 1921.

² In "The Book of the Poets." Comp. Schick, p. clvii.

³ See the Envoy on Rome, II. 4460, the Envoy on Cæsar, especially the latter part, VI. 2871, the Envoy on Charles of Anjou, IX. 2017, and the Chapter and Envoy on King John of France, IX. 3134.

work, is perhaps his strongest point. No doubt in his day he was highly commended for both pathos and humour; but the latter when not unconscious is as a rule little more than clumsy playfulness, and the former too obvious and exaggerated to make any deep impression on the reader (although Thomas Gray seems to have thought highly of it),¹ and neither is sufficient to make a poet. However, considering his intellectual environment, his position, and his public, he surely did all that can reasonably be expected of him. The rude men of action of the time were slow-witted and uneducated; even the clerks, if we are to judge, as we must, by their literary performances, were a singularly prosaic lot, and taste was evidently unknown in their circles. As Gray remarked, "it is a folly to judge of the understanding and of the patience of those times by our own. They [the reading public] loved, I will not say tediousness, but length and a train of circumstances in a narration." They got both in the "Fall of Princes." Even Boccaccio laid aside much of his genius when he began to write histories for the edification of the men of the world of his day; and whatever qualities of greatness the work possesses lie rather in the hammer blows of its subject-matter than in the art either of the author or of his translators.

On the other hand, the "Fall of Princes" is a document of considerable historical and philological importance. Taken together with the original Latin and Laurence's French translation, it does indeed illumine the intellectual life of its day,² if only faintly, for the thought reflected on the pages of both Laurence and Lydgate is unfortunately that of a very narrow and conservative group and cannot be considered as representative of the best minds of the time. The most that may be said of either of them is that he was able to recognize that, in general, men reap what they have sown.

From the philological point of view the book is of interest, in part because we may assume that the language in which it was written is the English of the most highly educated classes of its period, in part because, just as in the case of the "Troy

¹ Gray says that Lydgate, in the Epistle of Canace, "has touched the very heart-springs of compassion with so masterly a hand, as to merit a place among the greatest poets."

² Comp. Hortis, p. 654.

Book," many words borrowed early in the fifteenth century from the French make their first documented appearance on its pages. Practically the entire literature of the "Fall of Princes" has yet to be investigated. There is no modern edition either of Boccaccio or of Laurence; neither the one nor the other has been printed since the sixteenth century; no adequate study of their sources has been published; and except for Dr. Koepfel's short essay,¹ we have no account of Lydgate's sources or of the influence of his work on succeeding writers. The most recent edition of the "Mirror for Magistrates" is Haslewood's of 1815.

The text of the present edition is based on MS. Bodley 263 (B), collated throughout with the British Museum MSS. Royal 18. D. iv. (R) and Harley 1245 (H), and in part (especially in regard to doubtful points) with MSS. Royal 18. B. xxxi. (R 3), Harley 4203 (H 5), and the Rylands-Jersey MS. (J). Use has also been made of Sloane 4031, Add. 21,410, the Phillips-Garrett MS. in the Library of Princeton University, and Tottel's print, which, considering the time of its publication, is most excellent and derived from a good manuscript. The "Envoy to Gloucester" (IX. 3303-3540), the "Last Envoy" (IX. 3541-3588), and six stanzas missing from the story of Lucrece (II. 1058-1099) have been supplied from Harley 1766, a unique abridged but early MS., and one stanza of the Villon-like "Envoy on Rome" (II. 4460 ff.) is from Tottel, collated with the Phillips-Garrett MS.

In preparing the text for the press I have supplied capital letters when necessary and punctuated according to modern usage; but I have not noted blunders or slips of the pen that were subsequently corrected by the original copyist unless they are of special interest. All alterations in spelling by the editor are noted, with one exception: the awkward form "wordly" of the Bodley copyist, for which I have consistently substituted "worldly"; and all other changes in the text are marked by asterisks. The numerous hooks and flourishes of the scribe, which, when they signify only a final *e* (and often they are quite meaningless), have not as a rule been expanded unless the *e* is of more than graphical significance. For the crossed *b*'s, *k*'s, *l*'s and double *l*'s, I have

¹ Munich, 1885.

substituted plain letters, except when the horizontal stroke actually stands for a contraction, as, for example, "Boch" with crossed *b* = Bochas, "who" and "hy" with *b*'s crossed = whom and hym, "makyg" with crossed *k* = makyng. The crossed *l* is usually a contraction for a following *e*, as is also the crossed double *l*; the latter, which is commonly used in manuscripts of the period to represent *les*, is rarely, if at all, employed for that purpose in B. The occasional horizontal strokes over *m*'s and *n*'s and *u*'s are as a rule omitted to avoid confusion, and expanded only when actually necessary, as is certainly not the case in such words as Chaucer, up, favour, or dismembred.

In the following brief survey of the contents of the "Fall of Princes" the references are to the pages, and passages of special interest or charm are marked with asterisks.

Book I. Prologue; *Adam and Eve, 13; Nimrod, 28; *Against the Pride of Princes, 36; Saturn and the Process of Time, 39; Zoroaster, Ninus, Moses, 42; Ogygus, Isis, 45; Erysichthon, Danaus, Philomela and Procne, 49; Cadmus, 51; Æetes, Jason, Theseus, Scilla, Nisus, 60; Sisera, Deborah, Gideon, 79; Jabin, 86; Œdipus, 87; *Atreus and Thyestes, 106; The Story of Theseus, 118; *Envoy on Hasty Credence, 126; Facetious defence of Woman accused by Bochas of unstableness, 132; On the Suspicion and Dread of Lords, 134; Althæa and Meleager, 136; Hercules, 141 (lines 5104 ff. are excellent); Narcissus, Byblis, Myrrha, Orpheus (playful lines about marriage), 156; Marpessa, Priam and Troy Book, 166; *Against the Pride of Those who Trust in Riches, 170; *In Praise of Poverty, 172; *Samson, 179; *Chapter on the Malice of Women, 184; Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, 190; Canace and Macareus, 193; *The Letter of Canace, 194.

Book II. Saul, 204; On the Virtue of Obedience, 214; Rehoboam, 216; On the Governance of Princes (analogy of human body to body politic), 221; Mucius Scævola, Lucrece (first appearance), 225; Appius and Virginia, 237; Jeroboam, Zerah, Ahab, Athaliah, 240; Dido, 253; *Satirical Envoy to Widows by Lydgate, 262; *Sardanapalus, On Virtuous Industry, 263; *Amaziah and Uziah, Jehoash (good lines on the Cypress and the Puff-Ball), 272; Hoshea, Sennacherib, Zedekiah, 278; The Story of Cyrus' Youth (nobility comes by grace of God not by blood, poverty no bar to a throne), 283; *Candaules and Gyges, 294; Midas, Belshazzar, Envoy advising Princes to set aside their Concubines, 296; Cræsus and Cyrus, the

end of Cyrus, 300; Romulus and Remus, 311; * On the Abuse of Deifying Men, 318; Metius Suffetius, 319; * Against Deception, Hostilius, 323; * Envoy on Rome, 325.

Book III. * Prologue; the Strife between Fortune and Glad Poverty (tedious except for a few lighter touches), 333; Hostilius, Ancus Marcius, Lucinio, 349; Lucrece (second appearance), 355; * Bochas on the Immorality of Princes, 360; Cambyzes, Smerdis, Oropastes, Otanes, Darius, 374; Coriolanus, 381; Miltiades, 386; Envoy on the Fickleness of the People; Xerxes, Leonidas, 390; * On the Vulgar Materialism of Men, 399; Artabanus and Darius, 402; Phalanthus and his Spartans, 405; Ceso Quintius, Clœlius Gracchus, 410; * On the Tyranny of Appius, 413; On the Dishonesty of Judges and The Former Age (some interesting lines), 416; * An Exclamation against Dishonest Officials, 419; Alcibiades, 420; * Exclamation on the Death of Alcibiades, 430; * On Worldly Covetousness and Ambition, 432; * In Praise of Industrious Men, On Poets, 434; Machæus, Himilco, Hanno, 437; * Against Covetous People, 447; Evagoras of Cyprus, Theo of Egypt, Amyntas, Philip of Macedon, Epaminondas, 454; Haman and Mordecai, Esther, 462; Artaxerxes and Cyrus, Darius, An Envoy on Fraternal Strife, 465.

Book IV. * Prologue on Poets and Writing, 473; Marcus Manlius, Roman Crowns and Wreaths, 479; A description of Roman Triumphs, the Tarpeian Rock, 487; Nectanebes, Pausanias, Heliarchus, 492; * Dionysius of Syracuse, Envoy on Tyranny, on Princes who hold themselves Gods, 495; Polycrates, 500; Alexander and Callisthenes, 504; Alexander of Epirus, 513; Darius and Alexander the Great, 517; * Envoy on Darius, 527; On the Misery and Ruin of War, the Heirs of Alexander, Eumenes, Antigonus, 528; Envoy on Sudden Adversity, * Queen Olympias, 536; Envoy on Murder and Vengeance, 543; Agathocles (a crown of gold is not suitable for the head of a knave; a crowned ass is more to dread than a lion), 545; Envoy — every creature takes after his parents' stock, 553; Cassander, Bersane, Antipater, Peucestas, Amyntas, Sandrocottus, 554; Seleucus and Antiochus, Arsinoë and Ceraunus, * Envoy on Fortune's Variance, 562; Ceraunus slain by the Gauls, Brennus, who had no respect for the gods, Pyrrhus of Epirus, Aristotimus, 569; Arsinoë, wife of Magas, and Demetrius, her daughter's husband, 582.

Book V. Bochas' Disdain of those who set all their Joy to excel in Beauty, Spurina, * Envoy on the Fragility of Worldly Fairness, 585; Seleucus and Antiochus, 588; Laodameia of Sicily, Cleomenes, Hiero of Syracuse, Xanthippus, 592; Marcus Regulus, 597; Ptolemy Philopator, Britomaris, 608; Syphax and Masinissa, Hasdrubal, Scipio, 614; Nabis of Macedonia, 617; The Wars between Rome and Carthage, 619; Perseus

of Sparta, the Destruction of Corinth, 621; Seleucus and Antiochus, Laodice and the Ring and Anchor, 626; Hieronymus of Syracuse, the Ingratitude of the Romans to the Scipios, 630; Philopœmen, 634; the Story of Hannibal, 638; Prusias of Bithynia, Persa of Macedon, Azariah, Andriscus (a cur is more impudent than a lion), Alexander Balas, 645; An Envoy on Ingratitude; Caius and Tiberius Gracchus, Hasdrubal's wife, Jonathan Maccabeus, Demetrius II., Zebina, Bituitus, 655; Ptolemy Euergetes, Jugurtha, 666.

Book VI. *Fortuna appears to Bochas; they converse together, 675; Fortuna tells Bochas about Saturninus, Marius, Drusus, Fanaticus, Spartacus, Viriathus, Orodes and Pompey, 689; Marius and Sulla, 701; Mithridates, 711; Envoy on Worldly Variance, Eucratides of Scythia, Orodes and Crassus, Fymbria, Adrian of low degree, usurper of Rome, Sothimus, Description of Thrace, 720; Pompey and the Wars with Cæsar, 729; Pompey's Death, Julius Cæsar, Juba, *A Digression on Clothes, the last Scipio, Pompey's son Pompey, 743; the Death of Cæsar, Envoy on Cæsar, Octavian, Tully, 751; A Chapter on Rhetoric and Oratory, 763; Sextus Pompey, Antony and Cleopatra, 769.

Book VII. Antony's son, Antony, Cæsarion, Julia, Agrippa, Cassius, *Herod, Herod Antipas, 775; *The Words between Messalina, Caligula, and Tiberius, 784; *Nero, Eleazar, Galba, Otho, *Vitellius, 791; Bochas on The Vice of Gluttony, *A Description of the Golden World, 806; *The Destruction of Jerusalem, 812.

Book VIII. *Petrarch appears to Bochas, 823; the Roman Emperors, Domitian, Commodus, Severus, Antoninus, Macrinus, Antoninus Aurelius, Marcus Aurelius, Maximus, Gordian, the two Philips, Decius, Gallus, Volusian, Æmilian, Gallien, *Valerian, Gallienus, Quintilius, Aurelian the Dane, Probus, Clarus, 829; Zenobia, 842; Diocletian, Carausius, Maximian, Galerius, Maxence, Licinius, Constantine and Crispus, 844; Constans and Constantius, Vetranio, 853; *Constantine the Great, 856; *Julian the Apostate, On Blasphemy and Oaths, 864; Valens, Theodosius I., Hermanric, Gratian, *Theodosius the Great, 870; Alaric, Radagaisus, Rufinus, Stilicho, Heraclius, Odoacer, and *On the Conduct of Kings, 882; "Remembre o Rome," Trasilla, Busar, Philete, Symmachus, Boethius, 894; *King Arthur and Britain, An Exclamation against Men who are Unkind to their Kindred, 898; Gelimer, Amarales, Sindbal, *Queen Rosamond, 913.

Book IX. The Emperor Maurice, *Muhammad, *Brunhilde, 919; Heraclius and Chosroes, Constantine, son of Heraclius, who was murdered in a stew, Gisulf and his wife Romilda, Justinian Temerarius, Philippicus, an odious heretic, 933; The Covetousness and Pride of the Priesthood, Four strangely

dressed kings of Lombardy; Desiderius, Pope Joan, a woman with child, Arnulph, natural son of Carloman, made unfortunate by worms and lice, 942; Bochas against the Pride of Princes, Pope John XII., Duke Charles of Lorraine confounded by hunger, Salamon of Hungary, Diogenes Romanus, Robert of Normandy, Josselyn of Rages, Andronicus I. Comnenus, Envoy on Vicious Princes, 948; the Emperor Isaac, Robert Surrentine, Tancred, Guy de Lusignan, John of Brienne, Henry, son of Frederick II., A Commendation of Love between Kindred, 962; Manfred of Naples, Enzo of Sardinia, A Water that makes Thieves Blind and an Herb that makes People Laugh themselves to Death, Frederick, son of Alphonse of Castile, Maumetus of Persia, and Argones, 970; Charles of Lorraine, * Envoy to Charles, Ugolino of Pisa, Aiton of Armenia, Pope Boniface VIII., who ate his hands, 972; The Order of Templars, A Commendation of three Philosophers for their Patience, A Commendation of Patience, Philip the Fair and his Sons, 979; * Dante appears to Bochas and tells him to write the Story of Duke Gaultier, 990; * Philippa Catanensi, Louis of Jerusalem, * King John of France, 998; * Envoy to John of France, * A Chapter of Fortune, Envoy to Duke Humphrey, * The Last Envoy, Words of the Translator to his Book.

THE METRE

During the years that I have been occupied with the "Fall of Princes" the conclusion has been forced upon me more and more that Lydgate's decasyllabic lines are far better, in the sense of being more capably written from a purely metrical point of view, than some of his modern critics, who evidently had no proper facilities for studying his work, were able to discover. It is most improbable that his reputation as a poet among his contemporaries and immediate successors would have been as great as it was had he not had a good ear for rhythm and been a competent and, in spite of the convention of exaggerated modesty which led him to speak always in disparagement of his ability, skilful writer of metrical English. Nor is it easy to believe that his introduction of variety into what would have been otherwise an intolerably monotonous flow of regular decasyllabics was not both conscious and intentional. As Mr. Bridges has pointed out in one of his Oxford lectures on poetry, the fundamental motive of our pleasure in the beauty of verse "may be described as a balance between the expected and the unexpected," that "arises from our knowledge of the normal rhythm (the type) beneath the varieties which the poet delights to extend and elaborate; his skill in this sort of embroidery being to push its disguises as far as he dare without breaking away from the type."¹ It has also been well said by Mr. Owen Barfield,² that the music of poetry is "a kind of elusive discrepancy between two rhythms. Some rigidly regular metrical form is taken, . . . and on to this, as on an iron frame, is fitted a soft fabric of words already woven in a rhythm of their own . . . the rhythm of natural speech or prose. . . . The two rhythms clash and overlap, and subtly intersect in such a way that one

¹ Quoted from a review in the "Times Literary Supplement," July 4, 1918.

² "The New Statesman," January 15, 1921.

delicate, unreal echo is struck out from their jarring; and this is the main music of poetry." Accent is not constant, nor ought it to be constant, for if perfectly regular the effect of a long passage is ruined by its monotony.

Although such principles as these may not seem readily applicable to the art of a writer who usually manages to ruin his long passages in a wholly different and even less creditable manner, they are nevertheless to be considered in his case precisely as in that of any other writer of verse.

In the introductory note to the "Troy Book" I said that no fault could legitimately be found with the metre so long as Lydgate paid due regard to the swing of his dominant five beats, and I was no less unable to agree then than I am now with the opinion that because of his so-called broken-backed line, which can be on occasion a very fine line indeed, and the blunders of copyists he should be considered as inferior as a metrist as he undoubtedly was as a poet and thinker. If we are to do justice to Lydgate's metre, it is first of all necessary for us to know what Lydgate wrote. Even in the oldest manuscripts many lines occur in a distorted, mutilated form, and there are invariably some lines which appear to be defective in all manuscripts. It would be no less unfair to make Lydgate responsible for lines like these, than difficult, assuming that he did write them, to decide which of the alternative readings should be accepted as his. Another source of uncertainty to the present-day editor, of which I shall have occasion to speak later on, is a result of the increasing negligence of copyists during the fifteenth century, not only in regard to such small matters as final *e*'s, to which they gave no attention whatever, and various prefixes and suffixes, but sometimes extending to the insertion or omission of articles, conjunctions and prepositions, like *the* and *as*, or *for* preceding the *to* of the infinitive, and the alternative use of synonyms or parallel word-forms having an unequal number of syllables.

A further cause of trouble, which should not be forgotten, as it has had more influence, perhaps, than anything else in giving students false notions of Lydgate's metre and incidentally has shown how little real knowledge of his style there has been up to within comparatively recent times, is the attribution to him of works he did not write, such, for example, as "The

Assembly of Gods," and shorter poems, like the admirable but metrically corrupt "London Lickpenny."¹ Nor has the reissue of texts, which, like the *Secreta Secretorum*, exist only in a few late manuscripts and are naturally far from correct, tended to improve matters.

Unfortunately the question of Lydgate's metre is made very complicated by difficulties of the language; for unless we have a fair idea of the pronunciation of his time and class and a working knowledge of Chaucer's metrical practice, especially his use of the final *e*, for the analysis of which we are so largely indebted to Bernhard ten Brink, we cannot expect to get very far. To read Lydgate as if his language were present-day English, as I have actually heard some people do, or even to try to pronounce his lines as if they were written in French (which is somewhat closer to the mark), is impossible and absurd. At the best our attempts to reproduce his pronunciation and that of his contemporaries amount to no more than a very rough approximation. We are certain to do a large amount of misrepresenting and to make a good many mistakes; and I have often wondered, were Lydgate now alive and for once inclined to do a little correcting on his own account, what he would think of our efforts at criticism and interpretation and of the various opinions that have been expressed at different times by scholars in regard to his metre.

We have in the "Fall of Princes" numerous examples of all the "types" or "forms" of the decasyllabic line used by Lydgate except the somewhat doubtful type with a trisyllabic first measure. There are the normal type of ten or eleven syllables (A), the line with an extra syllable before the *cæ*sura (B), lines with a syllable missing directly after the *cæ*sura (C), with the first syllable missing (D), and with both the first syllable and the syllable after the *cæ*sura missing (a combination of C and D). There are very few examples of the combination of B and D described in the "Troy Book" under the heading 5, for most of these lines can be read as normal; and I can find no absolutely certain examples of lines with a

¹ See "The Lydgate Canon" by H. N. MacCracken, Miss Hammond's parallel text reprint in *Anglia*, xx., p. 400, and the text of the eight-line version in Sir Frederick Bridge's "The Old Cryes of London," Novello & Co., London, 1921.

trisyllabic first measure: it is questionable whether there are any such in the "Fall of Princes."

The majority of the lines are of the ordinary type A, with ten or eleven syllables:

- I. 2. The book of Bochas in Frensh to translate
- I. 3. Out of Latyn, he callid was Laurence, etc., etc.

Of type B there are also many examples:

- I. 29. Afforn prouydid that no presumpcioun
- II. 3361. Alas I was nat auysid weel befor
- II. 3458. Besouhte Bachus sum remedi to shape
- III. 1660. The temple off Iupiter to robbe it be rauyne (syncope of *i* in *Iupiter*)
- III. 3088. This litil tragedie doth shortli heer deuise (apocope of *il* in *litil*)
- III. 3355. Wenten into exil nat ferr fro that cuntre
- III. 3553. Cam out to meete hym upon a wol fair pleyne
- III. 3612. A thyng most odious to eueri comounte (synizesis of *io* in *odious*)
- VII. 206. An hundrid fourti four thousand as I reede
- IX. 2081. A thousand thre hundred acountid was the year (apocope of *ed* in *hundred*)

Other examples are: I. 5306, II. 1018, 1848, III. 1946, 2000, 2011, 3014, 3618, IV. 3127, 3961, V. 514, 2933, VI. 2353, 2953, 3347, VIII. 130, 1022, 1965, 2191, 2291, IX. 3050, 3067, 3386.

Type D is of frequent occurrence:

- I. 1. He that whilom dede his dilligence
- I. 9. Artificeres hauyng exercise
- I. 11. Shappis formys and newli hem deuys (read "forms")
- I. 27. With ther colours agreable of hewe
- III. 2235. Had also in cronycles as I reede (syncope of *y* in *cronycles*)
- III. 3617. How in manhod he was pereles
- V. 2857. To the Romeyns any wise tobeye

Lines in which the first syllable is missing and an extra syllable added before the cæsure are comparatively rare and difficult to identify with certainty, for most of them can be read very well as normal. The following are probably examples:

- II. 557. Stant the weelfare off eueri regeoun
- II. 728. In Ioséphus his story ye may reede
- II. 933. Wher Porcéna sat in his roial see
- VI. 3070. Alle assentid & sworn to Catallyne

In regard to type C, the so-called broken-backed line, it can be said with no less certainty that it was frequently used by Lydgate in the "Fall of Princes"—I cannot agree with Professor Kaluza's apparent rejection of it—than that properly

read and not lifted out of its context it is usually, although not always, admirable, and on the whole quite as "good" as any other line. In many cases it is a practical impossibility for us to say whether we have to deal with it or with the normal type (A), into which it can always be transformed by the addition of a syllable at the cæsure; and although I doubt that there was ever any question in Lydgate's mind as to what sort of line he was writing or how he intended his lines to be scanned, we are to-day greatly handicapped by the neglect of copyists in matters of detail (the presence or absence of a final *e* in a manuscript usually meaning nothing at all) as well as by our ignorance of Lydgate's pronunciation. In saying that the use of the final *e* as a metrical syllable was wholly artificial in Lydgate's time, for the reason that it had long disappeared from the spoken language, and that consequently it is not impossible that, for the sake of the metre, Lydgate sometimes added an *e* to words to which it did not belong etymologically,¹ Professor Kaluza was no doubt in the main correct. Only in the case of Lydgate, who although quite conscious of his inferiority always had Chaucer's metrical practice in mind and apparently never varied his method, the idea of time hardly comes into consideration. As a metrist he looked upon himself as one of his master's contemporaries. Final *e*'s had crept in through false analogy long before the fifteenth century, and it cannot be assumed that Lydgate knew very much about etymology; nevertheless, I believe that a careful examination of the metre will show nothing more than an inclination on Lydgate's part to make a somewhat fuller use of the final *e* than Chaucer did, especially in the dative case, more rarely in the accusative, and very seldom in the nominative, of nouns of the strong declension with consonant endings. There is no evidence whatever of an indiscriminate adding of silent *e*'s.

The following examples of type C are to my mind very good lines. Properly read, with a marked pause at the cæsure, there is no unpleasant clashing together of accented syllables. One could as well say that the syllables clash together unpleasantly in "That stretches and swings to the slow passionate pulse of the sea"; or "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows."

¹ *Literaturblatt für germ. Phil.*, 1899, pp. 373-375; 1900, p. 408.

- I. 5120. Nor alle men may nat been iliche
- I. 5671. And fynali as poetis telle
- II. 2795. Senacherib off Assirie kyng
- III. 1480. Ther woful fall Guido dede endite
- III. 1758. And heerupon to be certefied
- III. 2430. Foure thousand men Xerses thedir sente
- III. 2497. Fledde in a boot lik a coward knyht
- III. 2698. Bi gret auys weies he hath souht
- III. 2815. This was theeffect pleyntli in substaunce
- III. 2883. Nor fader non by his gret errour
- III. 2972. On hors[el]-bak thoruh ther gret swiftnesse
- III. 3219. Amyd the se ferr out fro the stronde
- III. 3522. Strong was the fihth or that thei wer take
- III. 3527. And aftir that whan he cam to londe
- III. 3555. Bothe old & yong with ful glad visages
- III. 3598. Banyshed ageyn out of his cite
- III. 3614. Which suffred nat them to lyue in pes
- III. 4372. Is seelde glad as for his partie
- III. 4459. Is onli this thei do non excesse
- V. 424. Tween man and man or of wilful rage
- V. 2204. Al desolat cried for almesse

Other good examples are: I. 4629, 5469, 5582, III. 2034, 2836, IV. 149, 1629, 1756, 2445, 3052, 3156, 3564, 3634, 3751, 3852, V. 63, 256, 588, 742, 813, 1110, 1923, 2019, 2878, 3085, VI. 1215, 1220, 1380, 1885, 2261, 65, 2351, 2782, 3049, VII. 315, 1495, VIII. 817, 1296, 1852, 2052, 2129, 2944, 3312, IX. 2020, 24, 2998, 3254.

In the following lines both the first syllable and a syllable at the cæsure are wanting:

- I. 906. Than a man for to haue delit
- I. 1004. Which that God took with Noes Flood
- IV. 860. Whereupon whan he caste his look
- V. 2063. Hanybal gan his purpos holde
- V. 2455. Set him up in his roiall stall
- VI. 792. Spartharchus was ther cheef capteyn
- VI. 914. Vnto which whan thei wer repered
- VI. 1335. Aftir that for hir gret fairnesse
- VI. 1796. Thei to hym yold[e] up the toun
- VIII. 53. Lik a man hangyng in ballaunce
- VIII. 515. Smet out oon of his eyen tweyne
- VIII. 2723. Orcadois Denmark and Houlond
- IX. 2303. Chewed it al on pecis smale
- IX. 2857. Day be day caried vitale

On the other hand, there are many doubtful and difficult examples of lines of the above types. Some of them, as Professor Kaluza and Dr. MacCracken have stated, can be easily mended, or, as I should prefer to say, transformed, into type A or D. It would be most undesirable to amend Lydgate with a view to smoothing his lines for the benefit of present-

day readers; and whenever textual alterations are undertaken it should naturally be done with the sole object of restoring, so far as we are able, the text to its original state. This we are often able to do successfully on the basis of the manuscripts; but when there is no manuscript authority for a change, it is best to leave things as they are unless the suggested emendation is a very simple and obvious one, as is sometimes the case; for often manuscript authority may represent nothing more, especially if in a late text, than the very questionable conjecture of a copyist. The presence or absence of a final *e* in a manuscript, as I have already said, usually means nothing: we are glad enough to take advantage of it when it is there; but the copyists apparently did not trouble themselves about it one way or the other, and the readers in Lydgate's day were presumably able to sound it for themselves where it was needed.

Lines like the following can easily be altered into the regular type; and in many such cases it is quite possible that Lydgate did originally write them in the more expanded form; yet the majority of these lines are wholly characteristic and require no emendation.

- III. 2336. But off assent cast in yōur passage (casteth)
- III. 2755. A myhti duc callid Palantus (y-callid)
- III. 3192. He callid was god of marchaundise (the god)
- IV. 2367. Another thyng bookis specifice (as bookis)
- IV. 3654. For thei wer set Bochas doth deuise (as Bochas)
- IX. 2998. And in caas verray resemblable (verraily)

Compare also III. 4787, V. 850, VI. 1362, etc.

Sometimes it is hard to say whether a line ought to be scanned as type C or type D; for here the type depends entirely upon whether the first syllable is emphasized or not, a matter which the taste of the modern reader must decide in the absence of all knowledge of the niceties of speech-accent of the fifteenth century:

- I. 682. And in ther trust for they wer nat stable
- II. 1616. The and thi kyn no man may socoure
- II. 1617. Flessh skyn and bon houndis shal deuoure
- IV. 529. He shal be set of gold bornid briht (gold probably disyllabic)
- IV. 3727. To his ences which that myhte auaille
- V. 519. And wher that he in his tendre age

In many other cases where at first sight there might appear

need for another syllable, there is actually no need for it; the syllable is already there. And although we certainly do not know just how Lydgate read his lines and pronounced his words, the conjecture at any rate lies near at hand that there was, in addition to diæresis (as in *Piroides*, II. 2502; *circuit*, VII. 654; *deer* [O. E. *diðr*], I. 5125; *boy*, V. 2588; *day* (?) II. 3396, V. 2019; *weel*, IV. 1564; *heeld*, III. 2131; *clees*, VI. 2481; *dees*, V. 2700; *trees*, I. 540, II. 2619), an occasional resolution of one syllable into two, either by lengthening or by the quasi-insertion of an extra vowel-sound, especially before an *r* and *l* and *n*. This is wholly consistent with the thicker and more broken utterance which, in view of the analogous mode of speech, preserved to-day, apparently independently of dialect, by country people in parts of England and especially of Ireland, we may assume was prevalent in Lydgate's time and among his class. Examples of such lengthening or vowel-insertion are: *Saul* (*Sauël*), II. 167, etc.; *foul* (O. E. *fugol*), IV. 1742; *tail* (O. E. *taegl*), I. 854, IX. 1467; *soil*, I. 746; *gold*, II. 3452, etc. (see *infra*); *poynt*, VI. 2440; *reyn* (O. E. *regn*), I. 713; *Minotaur*, I. 864; *tour*, I. 1098, II. 1738; *repeir*, VI. 3201; *dispeir*, VI. 2433; *hair* (*hèir*), I. 5140; *boor*, I. 4918; *boord*, IV. 1332; *fir* (*fire*), I. 1417, II. 2111 (comp. *feer-brond*, I. 6388).

The consonant combinations *lk* and *lf* seem to have formed a syllable by themselves in *folk* (*follek*), I. 148, III. 148, 4051, 4425, IV. 2442, IX. 1819, 2970 (but *folk*, monosyllable, I. 806, IV. 3630, V. 12), *calff*, I. 6380, *halff*, I. 6378, *mylk*, IV. 1131, and on occasion in *self* (*him*, *her-self*). The letter *r* was evidently strongly rolled, or pronounced with a distinct burr, producing a disyllabic effect in such words as *world*¹ (fem. *i* stem), which, however, has an organic silent *r* in the dative and accusative, I. 793, 822, 6179, 6253, II. 2081, III. 3165, IV. 83; in the strong masculines and neuters, *hors*, III. 1842, 52, 2556, 2979;² *arm*, II. 952, 1521; *clerk*, IV. 2663, IX. 113; *werk*, I. 1125, 29, 39; *turn*, IV. 2863, VI. 584; in the French words *cours*, III. 2802; *court*, II. 2251, III. 4785, VIII. 2945, 76, IX. 2103; and *sort*, I. 2725; and in *first*, *erst*, -*forn* and *thoruh*.

In *kyng*, the *g* may have been pronounced separately as

¹ Comp. VI. 201, 2515, 2893 *wor-eldli*.

² In VI. 1369, "Vpon an hors wildere than a leoun," the *a* is omitted in MSS. B and H, showing that the copyist probably said "hor-es," if he pronounced the word at all.

a guttural following the *n* (see ten Brink, §120, β), thereby producing an additional syllable that could be sounded or slurred at will. It is not at all probable that Lydgate added an *e*; yet the word is used in so many lines where two syllables are unquestionably required that it is difficult to believe that it was not indeed disyllabic:

- II. 1625. Off this warnyng the kyng took non heed
- II. 2937. The woful fal off kyng Amazie
- IV. 1800. And whan kyng Alisaundre hadde
- IV. 2390. And of the kyng of Epirothes
- VI. 1345. Which weddid was to kyng Tholome
- VI. 1681. So that the kyng Mitridate alas
- VIII. 3257. Of Gepidois how kyng Trusimounde
- IX. 903. This kyng caste the damages to redresse (apocope of the *s* in damages)
- IX. 2792. With kyng Iohn this Gaulteer lik a kniht

Other examples are: I. 5227, 5986, II. 1516, 24, 78, 2122, 2248, 2714, 3207, III. 2319, 74 2650, 2714, IV. 1552, 1863, 2340, V. 2968, VI. 1025, IX. 708, 924, 1287. Yet several of these are doubtful; we do not know but that Lydgate may have had the "broken-backed" line in his mind more often than is perhaps apparent to us now, and the following lines can be read very well with kyng as a monosyllable: II. 1665, 4107, III. 869, 4808, IV. 1461, 1944, 2981, V. 2409, IX. 865, 2956. On the other hand, kyng is certainly a monosyllable in lines III. 1705, 08, 39, 43, 2662, IV. 1315, 17, 78, VI. 1352, VIII. 2364, IX. 1285; and when it occurs at the end of a line it rhymes with the present participle (III. 1724, 4104, V. 2438, 3028, etc.).

To deth, str. masc., an *e* was probably added in the dative on occasion (pronounced dédē?); and examples of its dative use are comparatively numerous: I. 761, 5739, II. 2325, III. 2752, 4733, 54, IV. 722, 1083, 2062, 2133, 58, 3060, 3976, V. 2124, 2251, VI. 1163, 2550, 3618, VII. 56, VIII. 1044, 1434, 64, 1864, 2587, IX. 254. Of these lines, IV. 1083, "For of his deth no man list compleyne," and VIII. 1044, "Of whos deth Lycynus was glad," can be read as type D; and IV. 2062, "That for his deth tempred the poison," is a fine example of type C as it stands. Lines VI. 2087, 2504, and VIII. 1457 are of the normal type, requiring no *e* in the dative. The word occurs but seldom in the accusative case; but in lines IV. 1957, "Tauenge my

deth wrouht bi gret outrage," IX. 1515, "Tauenge the deth[e] of Andronicus," and IX. 2031, "His lyff his deth[e] put in iupartie," it may be considered to require two syllables.

In regard to *feeld*, str. masc., the indication is that it either took an *e*, when required, in both the dative and accusative, or was lengthened into *fe-eld*. There are many examples of its use: II. 2300, 09, 2648, 4358, III. 2103, 4914, IV. 222, 3652, 85, V. 324, 31, 2036, VI. 1871.

Wheel, str. neuter, was certainly disyllabic (Middle English spellings: *hweol*, *wheol*, *huezel*, etc.); compare nominative case, "Troy Book," II. 8561, and accusative, "Fall of Princes," V. 1145. An *e* may have been added to the dative, I. 2170, V. 2293, VI. 308, and in the "Troy Book," II. 2021; but I am inclined to doubt it, although in my indecision I added one in VI. 308. In lines VI. 703, 11, 2538 (dative), and IV. 2858 (accusative) it is all right as it stands.

Although *lord* is one of the masculines of the strong declension that sometimes takes an *e* in the dative in Chaucer (ten Brink, § 201), it is probable that it was also pronounced disyllabically *lau-erd*. It usually occurs in the accusative and nominative:

- I. 814. Was bi the Lord as hym list ordeyne
- I. 2790. Made hir lord at hir to disdeyne
- II. 1006. Also my lord bad I sholde abide
- II. 1936. Hadde slayn hir lord for his gret richesse
- II. 3426. Whan that his lord was be tresoun slayn
- II. 4542. And to that Lord bowwe down thi chyne
- III. 1984. Ful lik a lord and a knyhtli man
- VI. 1641. Was to his lord[e] fals & eek vnkynde
- VIII. 1879. Of his lord[e] be ful cruel hate

Compare also I. 6619, II. 196, VII. 1203, VIII. 881, 1674. In line II. 1930, *lord* is evidently monosyllabic; in IV. 1326, "Ageyn his lord bi an horrible cryme," the pronunciation of *lord* depends upon whether "bi an horrible" is elided or not: if we read "banorrible," *lord* is disyllabic.

In *kniht*, the *k* and the *n* were probably sounded separately, and the word was disyllabic (IV. 1924, VIII. 2845, 3231, IX. 642). *Hed*, str. neuter, was more likely pronounced *heved* than *hed[e]* when two syllables are needed; and although I have added an *e* in a few instances, it is rather to indicate that the word is disyllabic than to imply that Lydgate thought of

it otherwise than as heved. It occurs as a rule in the nominative and accusative:

- II. 3626. The speris hed roof hym thoruh the herte
- III. 1762. Gropyng his hed[e] as he lai slepyng
- IV. 3892. His hed smet off in the same place
- VI. 1159. Lost his hed[e] & his lyff in deede
- VI. 2453. Took up the hed[e] of that prince alas

The str. neuters gold and child were also in all probability disyllabic, go-eld and chi-eld:

- II. 3452. He thouhte gold myhte hym most auaille
- II. 3474. Though he of gold hadde so gret plente
- II. 3790. Riche of gold perle and precious stonys
- IV. 529. He shal be set of gold bornid briht
- IV. 889. Of most fyn gold shon so cleer & briht
- VIII. 1269. Al of gold fret with perles fyne

IV. 3684, "Armed al in gold and with gret violence," is of type A, with gold a monosyllable. I prefer to read VIII. 3160, "Al is nat gold that is cleer shynnyng," as type A rather than type D. In IV. 506, "Bies of gold crownes of laureer," we have the alternative choice of a disyllabic "gold" or a trisyllabic "c[o]rownes." There are numerous examples of child, which may have sometimes taken an *e* in the dative; we meet with it, however, most frequently in the nominative and accusative cases:

- I. 2104. She and hir child fill into the se
 - I. 3290. Hath maad this child now so fortunat
 - I. 3407. Is first a child which may nat suffice
 - I. 7037. Bad that the child sholde anon be take
 - II. 1582. Whethir the child sholde lyue or deye
 - II. 1808. Kepte this child in ful secre wise
 - II. 3100. To keepe the child was nat rekeles
 - II. 3103. How that this child greene & tendre off age
 - II. 3139. The yonge child took in ther depos
 - II. 3588. Because this child tendre yong & fair
 - IX. 2874. Sold hym a child which was born in Ynde
- Dative:
- II. 3624. And on the child which that stood beside
 - II. 3627. But off this child whan the deth was kouth
 - VI. 1351. Was with hir child[e]? seruid that was slayn

In other cases the word is to be read as a monosyllable in lines of types A and D (I. 3192, 99, 3213, 19, 27, 31, 45, II. 1624, 3108).

Blood, birth, land, and swerd (which may have been otherwise disyllabic, swe-erd, O. E. *sweord*) occasionally take an *e*

in the dative; good (possessions) apparently requires an *e* in the accusative, III. 3853. To the str. masc. gilt an *e* was probably added, I. 6925, but not elsewhere (III. 2034, IV. 427, 3751); hill also seems to have required an *e* in the dative (II. 4122, III. 2973, V. 2601, VI. 1612, VII. 1054). Wal, I. 2479, II. 3510, certainly was pronounced wal[le] in the dative and accusative, VI. 1108 and IV. 339. To knyff, II. 1305, 84, III. 1147; doom, V. 875, VI. 2926; crafft, I. 6523, 41; drem (perhaps disyllabic, O. E.* *dréam*), II. 3222, 3585, III. 1666, apparantly no *e* was added. The consonant-stem noun book, however, seems to have been sometimes disyllabic through the addition of an inorganic *e* to the dative, I. 4076, V. 306, 804, VI. 2871, IX. 177, 3070 (acc., I. 258, 423, VI. 224), although some of these lines can be read as type D.

The French words estat, III. 534, VI. 2865, VIII. 2786; chaung, I. 2064; assent, III. 2336, IV. 3787, V. 2000, IX. 1349, 3232; feith, IX. 1223, 28; and accord, I. 3706, II. 4117, IX. 2218, also seem to have required an *e* in some instances.

So far we have been dealing with lines that require more syllables than they apparently possess; but there are many other lines that at first sight might be considered to have too many syllables. It is therefore necessary to examine shortly Lydgate's usage in slurring over and eliding syllables and otherwise contracting his words.

There is very frequent use of elision and apocope. Of the former the following are characteristic examples:

Lat us (Lat's), I. 938; it wer ('twer), II. 3648; Fortune is (Fortune's), IX. 3526; There is (there's), I. 2581, 4611, II. 3639, III. 3932; He enfectith, I. 4624; He abod, III. 816; He is, I. 6986, III. 1365; Heere is, I. 2596; She is, I. 6185; Wil is, III. 3980; and in (=nin), VI. 2825; bi his, VI. 2633; be Amilius, II. 3992; Bi Eneas, II. 987; be interpretacioun, VIII. 1940; be influent, IX. 3222; be exacciouns, VIII. 2638; be occasioun, IX. 350; Be Honorius, VIII. 2281; Bamaner, VI. 944; bagredi, VI. 1005; birfadres, IV. 3324; bextorsioun, III. 3231, this (= that is) II. 4040; so infortunat, I. 3470; so onable, III. 49; elision of the *e* in *the* before vowels and *b*, I. 1370, 2388, 5848, III. 2352, V. 373, VI. 2303, 04, 3428, VII. 1120, 1400, VIII. 3261; of the *o* in *to*, I. 5719, II. 684, 2289,

IV. 3996, VI. 3267, VIII. 2056, 2205, 2394, IX. 2030; glorie and, I. 1118, II. 1073, 2108, III. 3343; miserie and, I. 968; slaundre and, III. 3017; childre and, III. 2007; wynter and, III. 2204; fadir and, I. 900; childre in, VIII. 2363; fadir in, I. 194; rekne in, VI. 1745; other in, I. 2860; lettir in, I. 6344; rancour in, II. 785; thastlabre in, I. 295; peeple in, I. 996; Brothir of, VII. 1044; double of, VIII. 3152; double Apostata VIII. 1483; title of, VI. 3647; slauhtre of, VIII. 223; temple off, III. 3315; sobre of, I. 6208; enlumyned off, III. 666; chartre is, V. 1873; mekil is, III. 555; writen is, V. 1476; lauhltre on, I. 1528; Phebus on, VI. 2472; Capue he, V. 2049; leuer he, III. 3918; togidre he, III. 4568; peeple he, II. 215; ordre as, VIII. 2598; sugre eek, I. 4001; title had, VI. 732; Vttre hem, VI. 298; merci or, II. 1699; gredi excesse, VI. 1425; foure elementis, VI. 3398; walkyn appeere, V. 1000; peeple onhappi, I. 3864; furie unrestreynable, III. 4027.

Apocope is quite frequent of the endings *el* or *le*, *er* (*ir*, *re*), *w*, *we*, *uh*, in *narw*, *naruh*, *sorwe*, etc., *ed* in hundred and the past participle,¹ and of the *es*, *is* in plurals, especially of French words. Examples are: *bridle*, III. 4608; *litol*, III. 3088, IV. 2345, VIII. 421; *stable*, III. 1878; *nouthur*, IV. 1035; *sobre*, I. 3449; *remembre*, I. 3102; *fostre*, I. 3255; *hunger*, VII. 1353; *mooder*, I. 4811, 6185, III. 3980, IV. 151, V. 2940; *moordre*, VIII. 3372; *whethir*, I. 4653, 4658, 59, 61; *somer*, III. 2204, *mydsomer*, I. 3998; *holuh*, V. 2105; *sorwe*, I. 3532; *a-morwe*, III. 1524, 3825; *naruh*, III. 208; *folwe*, III. 1488; *hundred*, VIII. 2296, IX. 2081; *fadid*, VIII. 194; *weddid*, IV. 3968; *disclaundrid*, IX. 2445; *delyuered*, III. 3314; *corages*, I. 999, 2931, (rhymes "corages: language: visage," I. 5154); *offices*, I. 614; *deluges*, I. 1081; *pillages*, I. 6139, IV. 836, VIII. 2638; *pryncessis*, I. 1829, 3125, II. 4230, *trespacis*, I. 2911, II. 4582, V. 3109; *sciences*, I. 4246; *facis*, VIII. 3142; *ymages*, II. 834, 4497, V. 1440; *damages*, III. 2483, IV. 639, IX. 3023; *euidencis*, I. 3105; *toknes*, IX. 117; *prouynces*, III. 4867, VII. 1564, VIII. 698; *richessis*, III. 4240, 45, 4932, IV. 3924, VIII. 2596 (rhymes with apocopated "falsnessis, witnessis," V. 1661); *goddessis*, VII. 837, IX. 277, (rhymes with apocopated "witnessis, brihtnessis," IX. 282, with "heuynessis," IX. 293); *liknessis*, IV. 17; *paleisis*, VI. 1296.

¹ See V. 3021, where "exercised" rhymes with "deuse" and "guise."

Syncope also is frequent and often indicated by contractions. It occurs in the third and second person singular endings of many verbs, in the participle, in the plural of nouns ending in *es* (*is*), and otherwise in a very large number of words. Examples are: appallith, III. 1629; causeth, III. 4046; gynneth, III. 4547; komth, III. 1036; lakketh, III. 2275; makith, I. 1015, makth III. 70, maketh, III. 1628, 3235, 4209, VI. 1282; taketh, III. 533, 1235, 1625; tarageth, IV. 2930; yeueth, III. 397; holdeth, II. 531; preueth, III. 4035; declareth, II. 3462; bryngith, I. 1414; reuersith, III. 1462; setteſt, VI. 495; recurid, III. 1400; astonid, IV. 939; commaunded, IV. 427; namyd, I. 574; lokkid, VIII. 42.

In the plural of nouns: goddis, II. 4256, III. 3564, IV. 3708, 23, 37; innocentis, II. 4421; personys, III. 3607; myscheuys, VIII. 2626.

Other examples are: adamaunt, IV. 66; aduertiseth, I. 806; aduersite, VI. 1262, 1687, VIII. 3259, IX. 1845; antiquite, IX. 916; appetit, VI. 1319, appetites, VIII. 2404; auctorite, VI. 2242, VIII. 971, 2054, 2216, IX. 2171, 99, 2645; auisili, VI. 3356; bestialite, IV. 2687; cardynales, IX. 1087, cardynal, IX. 2100 (but cardinales, IX. 1077); cathedral, VIII. 2035; chapitle, I. 4499, VI. 1282; charite, VII. 1172, IX. 2400; cherisse, I. 997, 3840, II. 3146, IV. 1372, VIII. 2366, cherysshynge, II. 1096 (but cherissid, III. 4794); chronycle, I. 2607; citeſeyns, IV. 3916; confederat, VIII. 2256; consuleris, V. 1956; contemplatyff, IX. 3413; corrupt, III. 967 (but corupt, VIII. 990); countirfet, VII. 1207; countirpeis, VI. 2893; couenable, III. 4006, VI. 618; delicat, VI. 1424; dilligentli, VII. 1324; disconfited, I. 5291, III. 2520, VI. 2132, VIII. 1055, 2511; disseueraunce, III. 2814; disherited, I. 2563; dissymulyng, IV. 1306; enheritour, IX. 1252; enlumined, III. 666; emperour, VIII. 754, 1041, emperours, II. 4467, VII. 1264; felicite, I. 1834, III. 1153, infelicite, I. 3168; fauourable (slurred), IV. 990; felashipe, VII. 8; flaters, III. 3164, IX. 2712; floryshynges, IX. 3446; gentillesse, IV. 2702; gouernaunce, V. 1770; gouernour, V. 1758, IX. 49; humylyte, IX. 2393; imagynatyff, VIII. 521; importable, VIII. 1579; impossible, I. 3835, VI. 1717; indigent, III. 4324; infirmytes, VII. 1256, IX. 1087; infortunat, IV. 3987; innocent, IX. 1493; ipocras, VII. 1282; laboreer, VII. 1198, liberalite, IV. 3994, libertes, IX. 2608;

mageste, IV. 3127; magnificence, IX. 3602; malencolie, III. 4026; malencolik, VI. 3442; martirloge, IX. 42; mellodie, VI. 344; merciful, VIII. 1204; meryly, I. 4795; modēfie, IX. 2615; mutabilite, V. 1823, VI. 399; myneral, VII. 1216; myracle, VIII. 1503, 1623; naked, VII. 1062; necessite, I. 4981, VII. 548; norice, III. 4278; notable, I. 1460, VI. 513, 891, 3630, VII. 84; ocupied, VIII. 299; onchaungable, I. 1207; ordenaunce, VIII. 933; origynal, IV. 1137; perisshed, IV. 22; pestilence, VII. 1353; philosophie, IV. 1139, VI. 345; philosophe, VI. 1303, 3120, VII. 1223; politik, VI. 347; polyshing, III. 1040; possible, VI. 3199; predecessours, I. 3910; prerogatif, VI. 3377; prerogatyues, VI. 3080; promyses, III. 4252; prosperite, I. 124, IV. 1052, 68, VIII. 2550, 2671; punysse, II. 1241, 1327, 4380, III. 1457 (but punyshe, III. 304, 1129, 1684, etc.); rethorik, VIII. 193; reuerence, II. 1966, IX. 2101; reuolucioun, VI. 189; salari, II. 3167; senatours, VI. 3104, 3226, VII. 543, VIII. 2539 (but senatours VIII. 223); sensualite, V. 1503, VI. 3381, VIII. 2350; seuē, III. 2530, 2651, 2702, 37, 4550, IV. 113; skarmyshe, IV. 292; souereyne, V. 1172; subtilite, V. 1609; syngulerte, III. 1280, 2258; synguler, I. 409, II. 4305, III. 2136, IV. 133, VI. 2209, 3004, 3140 (but synguler, IV. 3623); tragedie, I. 5519, 44; trynyste, IX. 2404; venymous, III. 4595; werreyours, VII. 1036.

Synizesis, the combination into one syllable of two vowels that can not make a diphthong, is frequent and often accompanied by slurring. Mariage is as a rule of two syllables = marage (I. 1988, 3483, 3752, II. 2121, III. 4112, 16, IV. 184, 3973, VIII. 3273, IX. 257, 63, 73, 83, 88, etc.); but we also have mariage in three syllables (I. 3500, 5462). Other examples are: cariage, V. 1931; alliaunce, V. 2450 (alliaunce, IX. 259); daliaunce, VI. 214, 3467; embassiat, V. 1545; meriere, I. 5813; permiable, VI. 2168; rhetoricien, VI. 3454; superfluite, VI. 2689, 3332, VII. 1307; tarieng, VI. 2737; variaunce, VI. 2893, 3399; vertuqus, III. 4383, VIII. 127, IX. 1153, 2027, 3046 (but vertuous, VII. 399, IX. 2034).

There is synizesis of the *i* and *o* in the following adjectives: compendious, VI. 3630; contrarious, IX. 529; furious, I. 2388; gracious, IX. 3349; ungracious, VIII. 3273; victorious, II. 204, VI. 1209, IX. 2417.

The same applies to many nouns ending in *ioun*: accusacioun,

V. 1658; affeccioun, III. 821; champiouns, IX. 2426; collu-sioun, II. 4240, III. 1713; compassioun, III. 4812, VI. 276, 2996; composicioun, II. 766; condicioun, VI. 281; confeciouns, III. 2574, IX. 2907; coniuracioun, VI. 3052; conspiracioun, VII. 447, VIII. 3127; constellacioun, III. 3628; contencioun, IV. 436; desolacioun, VI. 362; deuocioun, IX. 2140; digressioun, III. 3228, V. 1776, VI. 2000 (but not in VI. 3330); dilacioun, I. 7053; discencioun, IV. 677; discrecioun, I. 503, III. 4627, IV. 2329, 4032, V. 1783; divisioun, III. 5122, VI. 2310, 2535 (but not so in lines I. 4611, VI. 358, 3329, and perhaps in IX. 511); dominacioun, VIII. 229, IX. 1507; ellocucioun, VI. 3334; entencioun, IV. 1365; execu-cioun, IX. 2982; extorsioun, III. 3231; exacciouns, IX. 2615; facioun, I. 5051; fundacioun, IX. 2427; generaciouns, VI. 3400; intrusioun, VIII. 2316; lamentaciouns, VI. 2384; men-cioun, III. 4941, VIII. 1174; obligacioun, IV. 1978; occa-siouns, I. 4736, in sing., IV. 1013; oppressioun, VIII. 1306; perfeccioun, IX. 798; pocessioun, VIII. 2891; presumpcioun, IX. 939 (but four syllables, VI. 3628); professioun, VIII. 1480, 2250; pronunciacioun, VI. 3140, 3340; refecciouns, VII. 904; religioun, IX. 2129; reuolucioun, VI. 189; subieccioun, V. 582; successioun, I. 4273, III. 2964; supplantacioun, IX. 3039; suspeccioun, III. 2728.

Synizesis also occurs in proper nouns, such as Albioun, VI. 2882; Amphioun, VI. 3491; Scipioun, V. 1249, etc.

Hiatus is comparatively rare, but nevertheless there are a number of cases where the final *e* is evidently sounded before a succeeding vowel, as in VI. 2461, "Bi fals rauyne and extor-sioun"; VII. 268, "The firste also who list take heede;" VII. 380, "And saide also mor for assuraunce;" VIII. 2395, "Brothir to force auctours seyn echon"; IX. 1044, "In suich disioynt the sayd[e] Arnold stood." There are other ex-amples in which the words "hoost" and "steel" with dative ending are followed by the word "armed."

In proper nouns the accent is often shifted from one syl-lable to another; sometimes a name is shortened by apocope, or, as we have seen above, by synizesis. Thus, Ypolitus reads Ypolitus, I. 4488; Róboam, II. 772, Róboám, II. 792; Ierusá-lem, II. 755, 1825, 2656, 83, but Ierusálém, II. 707, 1491, 2891, VII. 1458, IX. 1859, 1917, 57; Abithómarus, V. 957,

Abithomárus, V. 981, Abithómarus, V. 946; Lacedémóyn and Lacedémoyne, III. 3362, 77, 3439, 64, etc.; Pelopia, I. 4151; Odóacer, VIII. 2510, Oðacer, VIII. 2501; Anthiöchus, V. 1523, 48, 2781, Anthiöchus, V. 1590, etc.; Nabugodonosor, II. 3531; Artabanus, III. 2669, Artabanus, III. 2647, 92; Fanaticus, VI. 662; Tantalus, III. 3730; Diogenes, III. 4392; Macedoyne, V. 282; Laodices, V. 1473; Aristobolus, VI. 2742, 52; Constantynople, VIII. 2222; Alcibiádes and Alcibiades, III. 3375, etc.; Tholome and Tholome, VI. 2627, 48, 52; Artaxerxes, III. 5022, but usually Artaxerxes; Iubiter and Iubiter, III. 1660, VI. 3206, VII. 385, 551, VIII. 1001, 1004; Radagasus and Radagasus, VIII. 2143, 60, 62; Cesarea, VIII. 1733, Cesarea, VIII. 1747; Phebus, VI. 2472; Alisaundre, IV. 1428, etc.; Cleopatra, VI. 2648, Cleopatra, VI. 2643; Calligula, VII. 411, 86, Calligula, VII. 323; Antigonus, IV. 2264, Antigonus, IV. 2282; Galerius, VIII. 980, Galerius, VIII. 981.

It is exceedingly doubtful whether there are any lines with a trisyllabic first measure in the "Fall of Princes." Personally I am inclined to believe that there are none. Lines having the word "seven" in the second measure will hardly do, for seven, with the second *e* syncopated, was a monosyllable (I. 4255, IV. 1166, 1232). "Philisophre" was disyllabic through syncope of the second *i*, which puts IV. 1303 and VI. 3120 out of court (comp. also VII. 1223 and philosophie in IV. 1139 and VI. 345). In VIII. 1005, "In the capitoile set sothli as he saide," the first *i* in "capitoile" is syncopated; the line is regular. In the line, I. 4169, "Off the noble worthi kyng Agamenoun," "noble" loses its second syllable through apocope. The first *i* in "countirpeis," VI. 2893, is syncopated and the *r* slurred (comp. countirfet, VII. 1207); and in the only remaining questionable line of this sort that I have noted, VI. 3104, "In the Romeyn court affor the senatours," there is syncope of the *e* in "senatours" (for further references see senatour in list of words illustrating syncope).

There are several irregular lines, but whether the irregularity is due to the author or to the copyists is often impossible to say. Line 3480, Book III., "This was the mene that he mente," has only four beats as it stands, and may have been, but was probably not, so written by Lydgate. "Natwithstanding mor boldli that tyme atte leste" (VII. 962) has

evidently been garbled; VI. 991, "Sone of a carpenteer the stori tellith thus," has a beat too many unless the *er* in "carpenteer" is syncopated; and VII. 356, "With certeyn drynkis to cast hym in a rerage" (rhyming with age), apparently has one syllable too many as it appears in the MSS. There are many lines in which the accent is thrown on the definite article; but whether the practice was considered objectionable I cannot say. It is at any rate very easy to read such lines by slurring over the arsis, a practice not unknown in the poetry of the present day. The following are examples:

- I. 2172. To conside the successiouns
- I. 5663. Sterte into the welle and hymseluen dreynt
- II. 2924. Off mortal man the condicioun
- III. 1611. It is in erthe oon the moste pereilous thyng
- IV. 513. The straunge salaire and the famous guerdoun
- IV. 2846. And eclipsed the liht of his glorie
- VI. 94. Othir vndir the pool Antartik
- VI. 2307. Gan among Romeyns and the contagious fith
- VIII. 179. That laboure may of slouthe haue the victorie

In the following lines the accent falls on the indefinite article:

- I. 959. Suffred ~~on~~ a crosse deth and passiou
- I. 2332. The fir brast out a ful large space
- VI. 3187. In a desert and a gret wildirnesse

Finally, in some cases it is preferable to read a word in a shorter, but alternative, form to that which occurs in the text. Thus, Lydgate probably wrote "vauntage" rather than "auauntage" in III. 499, "It were to me no worshepe nor auauntage"; and in several lines, "geyn" is preferable to "ageyn." In VI. 2307 above, Lydgate may have written "mong." The copyists did not seem to care which form they used.

I have made the following emendations to the text without manuscript authority; but all except one (VI. 2459) are obvious and simple corrections of copyists' blunders and omissions:

- II. 423. Natwithstanding [that] the Palestynes
- II. 1732. Till al his blood be bledyng dede raile * (The MSS. and prints have "fayle" instead of "raile," a blunder evidently of an early copyist.)
- III. 2906. Thei heeld hemsilff[e] verrai[ly] ashamed (The MSS. and prints have "verrai.")
- IV. 1627. And [he] hadde toward thoxident

- IV. 1972. Hir * fatal wheel most dyuers & chaungable (The MSS. have "Ther" instead of "Hir," but the wheel is Fortuna's wheel.)
- IV. 2744. With al the viciis * of pride & lecherie (The reading in the MSS. is "spicis," "spices," "spyces," and "spises" in Tottel.)
- IV. 2791. Callid [him] hom ageyn into ther toun
- V. 992. And of thes [noble] worthi princis tweyne
- V. 3141. Off this moordre[r] the hatful tirannye
- VI. 2459. Which thoruh the * world yiueth so gret a soun (The MSS. have "thoruh al the world"; and it is possible that Lydgate so wrote the line, although he uses "al" in the preceding line.)
- VII. 1610. Of plate and maile [ther] armure was so fair
- VIII. 408. To this emperour I nil * resorte ageyn (The MSS. have "wil" instead of "nil.")

De Casibus Virorum Illustrium

BOCCACCIO'S PREFACE TO HIS FIRST VERSION¹

Exquirenti mihi quid ex labore studiorum meorum possem reipublicae vtilitatis adferre, mores hominum illustrium maxime obtulere sese obuiam: quos dum illecebres turpique libidine fœdos intuerer: effraenesque non aliter quam si fortunam in sopnum perpetuum soporassent hærbis aut cantato carmine: suosque principatus ferreis vncis adamantino in scopulo firmassent: aduerterem: Nec ob id solum cæteros pro viribus premere: quinimmo et in ipsum rerum omnium opificem stulta quadam temeritate consurgere cernerem: obstupui. Et dum damnarem dementia: longam quepii patris patientiam admirarer: Ecce in mentem incidit quod quærebam. Quid enim hac charitate auditati mortalium et saluti perpetuæ vtilius: quam oberrantes si possis / in rectum tramitem reuocare? In quod & si hactenus eloquentissimi & sacra pietate conspicui viri persæpe conatu maximo elaborauerunt: Non inofficiosum existimo: si vt ipse (quamuis per viribus non sim) eos a sopore letifero inuitarem: vigiliam excussisse tentauerim. Sane quum tales oscenis voluptatibus adsueti difficiles animos demonstrationibus præstare consueuerint: & lepiditate historiarum capi nonnunquam: exemplis agendum ratus sum. Et quid deus siue (vt eorum more loquar) fortuna in elatos possit describere: Et (ne in tempus aut sexum cadat obiectio) a mundi primordio in nostrum vsque æuum consternatos duces: illustresque alios tam viros quam mulieres passim disiectos: in medium succincte deducere mens est. Absit tamen vt omnes dixerim. Quis enim mortalium tanti foret vt infinito posset labori sufficere? Set ex claris quosdam clarissimos excerpsisse sat erit, vt dum senes fluxosque principes et dei iudicio quasatos in solum reges viderint: dei potentiam: fragilitatem suam: & fortunæ lubricum noscant: & lætis modum ponere discant: Et sic aliorum periculo suæ possint vtilitati consulere. Porro ne continua historiarum series legenti possit esse fasti dio: morsus in vitia: & ad virtutem suasiones inseruisse quandoque tam delectabile quam vtile arbitratus: adnectam. Cui tam sublimi cœpto ac successui is quem penes potestas est omnis / supplex precor / sauens adsit: & in sui nominis gloriam quod scripsisse dederit ipse conseruet.

¹ From Jean Petit's edition [n.d., but after 1507].

BOCCACCIO'S PREFACE TO HIS SECOND VERSION¹

IN CASVS VIRORVM ILLVSTRIVM IOANNIS BOCATII
DE CÉRTALDO HISTORIOGRAPHI CLARISSIMI PRÆFATIO

Exquirenti mihi, quid ex labore studiorum meorum possem forsā Reipub. utilitatis addere, occurrere præter creditum multa, maiori tamen ornatu in mentem sese ingressere principum, atque præsidium quorum cunque obscenæ libidines, violentiæ truces, perdita otia, auaritia inexplēbilis, cruenta odia, vltiones armatæ, præcipitesque, & longe plura scelestā facinora. Quæ cum ductu cælestium viderem in illo coercito freno euolantia undique, inde honestatem omnem fœdari publicam, iustitiæ sacratissimas leges solui, labefactari uirtutes omnes, & quod infandum est, detestandis exemplis, in mores impios ignaræ multitudinis ingenia trahi. Ratus eo me à fortuna deductum, quo appetebat intentio: festinus arripui calamum scripturus in tales. Nam quid satius est, quam uires omnes exponere, ut in frugem melioris uitæ retrahantur errantes, à desidibus sopitis letalis somnus excutiat, uitia reprimantur, & extollantur virtutes. Nec me teruit maiorum nostrorum in hos ingentia vidisse volumina, & illa nouisse styli suauitate, & pondere sententiarum meis literulis præponenda: plurimum eum meminerim, nonnunquam rudem notulam excitasse nonnullos, quos tonitrua mouisse non poterant. Bona igitur pace talium, quo impellit dicendi impetus tendam: si forsā saxea hæc corda, tenui spiritu oris mei, in salutem meam mollire saltem paululum queam. Sanè cum tales obstant, sueti voluptatibus animos difficiles demonstrationibus præstare consuerint, & lepiditate Historiarum capi nonnunquam, exemplis agendum ratus sum eis, quid Deus omnipotens, seu, ut eorum loquar more, fortuna in elatos possit, & fecerit. Et ne in tempus, aut sexum cadat abiectio, à mundi primordio, in nostrum usque æuum consternatos duces, illustresque alios, tam uiros, quam mulieres passim deiectos, in medium succincte deducere mens est. Absit tamen ut omnes dixerim. Quis enim mortalium tanti foret? ut infinito labori possit sufficere? Sed ex claris quosdam clariores excerptisse satis erit. Ut dum segnes, fluxosque principes, & Dei iudicio quasatos in solum, reges viderint, Dei potentiam, fragilitatem suam, & fortunæ lubricum noscant: & lætiis modum ponere discant, ut aliorum periculo suæ possint vtilitati consulere. Porro ne continua historiarum series legenti possit fastidium aliquod inferre, morsus in vitia, et ad virtutem suasionēs inseruisse quandoque, tam delectabile, quam utile arbitratus annectam. Cui tam audaci ceptui, & successui, eum quem penes maiestas est omnis supprecor, fauens adsit, & in sui nominis gloriam, quod scripsisse dederit, ipse conseruet.

¹ From Ziegler's edition, Augsburg, 1544.

BOCCACCIO'S LETTER TO MAINARDO¹

IOANNES BOCATIVS DE CERTALDO HISTORIAE HUS,
MACHINARDO EX CLARA CAUALCANTIVM
FAMILIA VIRO CLARISSIMO

Div strenve miles emvinctum ex ingenio meo opusculum, in quo virorum Illustrium tractantur casus, & ut plurimum infelices exitus, me penes ociosum fuit. Non enim satis mecum conueniebam, cui nam primo illud mittere uellem, ut nomini suo aliquid adferret ornatus: & eiusdem adiutus subsidijs, melioribus quam meis auspicijs prodiret in medium. Cupimus enim omnes, quadam vmbratili impulsu gloria, quibus auxilijs possumus, fragiles labores nostros nobilitare, & diuturniores facere: & scriptores potissime. Et inter alia, quasi multum illis splendoris consequuturum sit, Pontifici, seu Cæsari, aut Regi, uel alicui principi maximo titulamus eosdem. Quamobrem longa indagine mentis quæsiui, quem ex multis unum eligerem: & ante alios præpollentes mecum euoluere cœpi Pontifices, quorum vetus sanctitas, iamdudum plures, pia affectione, libellos claros reddiderat. Sane dum modernos, ex veteribus exorbitantes, (qui lachrymis, & orationibus in aduersantes deuotioni eorum, uirtutes coelorum mouere consueuerant) vidi ex sacerdotalibus infulis galeas, ex pastoralibus baculis lanceas, ex sacris uestibus loricas, in quietem, et libertatem innocentium commutare: ambire Martialia castra, incendijs, violentijs, Christiano sanguine fuso lætari: satagentesque aduersus veritatis verbum dicentis, Regnum meum non est de hoc mundo, orbis imperium occupare, horruï, retraxique pedem: ratus apud huiusmodi ludibrium potius opusculum meum futurum, quam ob aliquod eius meritum preciosum: & ab ijs frustratus, in hodiernum Cæsarem aciem mentis deflexi. Sed confestim reuocaui consilium, sentiens eum magnalium suorum immemorem, præponentemque Thebani Bacchi uina colentis gloriam, splendoribus Martis Italici, nec non torpentem sub Circio in extremo orbis angulo, inter niues, & pocula. Sed quid tandem? subiere pectus anxium, qui notis insigniti regijs, reges haberi uolunt, cum phalerati sint onagri: & ij potissime, qui hac tempestate præsident regnis. Occurritque primus Gallus Sicamber, qui se temerario ausu genere, & moribus præferre cæteris audet: & cui primates monstrauere sui, nedum philosophari turpissimum fore Regi, uerem literarum nouisse characteres, detrimentum Regiæ Maiestatis permaximum signari. Qui sic sapiunt, damnantes in Regibus, quod bellicosos reddit egregios. Inde Hispani, seu Barbari, & efferaces hoies affuere. Post & Seuerus Britannus, elatus nouis successibus. Sic et Pannonius Bilinguis populi multi-

¹ From Ziegler's edition.

tudine potius quam virtute valens. Postremo mollis, & effœminatus Siculus. Quorum omnium dum mores, & vitam segregatim intueor, ne per eorum discurram luxum, & inertiam, rectius regum simulachra, quàm reges uisi sunt, Quadpropter nausea quadam vexatus (ne in fabulam deducere, quod cupiebam extollere) ab indagine destiti: & quasi decreueram illud fortunæ manibus committere, et ferè iam emissurus eram, dum illi misertus Deus, in laudabile consilium inciidi. Nemini scilicet quamtumcumque eminenti, atque præfulgido principi posse quiddam fidentius quàm amico committi: etiamsi extremæ fortis homo sit. Quod iampridem persæpe legimus illustres fecisse uiros. Et cum tali gratularer animaduertentiae, & ecce quasi tu missus in mentem uenisti. Tum ego mecum, quid inter syluestres beluas rugientes potius quàm loquentes, magistræ rerum philosophiæ hostes quæris, quod in sinu tuo optatissimum tenes, quod in oculis tuis assidue est, quod te coram semper obambulat? Nonne uides Machinardum tuum? tua iamdiu approbatum sententia: cuius fidem, dilectionem, cuius munificentiam sæpe expertus es. Quem ergo alium quæris? Nonne insuper huic sacra affinitate iunctus es? Secum si meminit, vnici filij eius communis pater es. Illi enim dedit ipse naturali lege ut esset, cum paracleto operante spiritu, ut bene esset dedisti, dum illum ex sacri fontis lauacro suscepisti. Præterea is, esto, plene philosophicis eruditus non sit, amantissimus tamen studiorum est, & probatorum hominum præcipuus cultor, atque eorum operum solertissimus indagator. Nec est, quod tu summopere uitare uidebaris, vnus ex mercenaria plebe, aut inglorius, & degener homo, regia enim militia insignitus est, & egregie splendido titulo: & ex Caualcantibus clara ciuitatis nostræ familia genitus. Ab auorum fulgore non deuiat, quinimo singulare decus, & pricæ virtutis specimen, nomen suum, & patriam laudabili fulgore reddit illustrem. Quid multa dixerim? a deo in sententiam hanc venisse placuit, ut quanto magis mecum ista reuoluerem, tanto arctius roboraretur consilium, et firmitus infingeretur animo. Tuo igitur, amantissime mi, dummodo pauperis amici munusculum non renuas, honorando semper nomini dico, quod paulo ante Regali insigniri cupiebam. Suscipe illud liberali animo, si quid sanctum amicitiae nomen, iamdiu inter te, & me æquo firmatum animo meretur. Quæso susceptum, dum per honestum ocium poteris legas, non equidem legisse penitebit, si satis ingenium tuum noui. Et inter legendum non pigeat minus decenter se habentia emendasse. Et dum uidebitur, post hoc, inter amicos communes, & postremo tuo nomine emittas in publicum, ut ipse pro viribus celebre nomen tuum, meumque aliquali fulgore, per ora uirorum discurrens, illustres. Vale.

Des Cas Des Nobles Hommes et Femmes

LAURENCE'S TRANSLATION OF BOCCACCIO'S
PREFACE ¹

[*This was retained in Laurence's second version.*]

Cest la translacion du prologue Iehan boccace ou liure des cas des nobles hommes & femmes maleureux, commençant en latin: Exquirenti michi quid ex labore, & cetera. [¶ Et enuoie son liure a vng sien compere cheualier appelle messire maguard des cheualchans de florence Senechal de Scicile ainsi comme Il appart par vne epistre surce faicte par le dit Boccace en la quele Il blasme et reprent ouuertement et a cause tous les princes crestiens.]²

Quant le enqueroye quel prouffit le peusse faire a la chose publique par le labeur de mon estude, le tournay mon engin a considerer les maintiens & les meurs des nobles hommes & femmes qui principalement se presenterent deuant les yuelx de mon entendement, & quant le les apperceu ordoyez en vains delictz & en plaisirs deshonestes, le consideray Iceulx estre desroyes & sans fraing, ainsy comme se [ilz eussent endormie fortune par herbes ou par enchantemens ou ainsi comme se]³ Ilz eussent fermees leurs seignouries a croz de fer a roche daymant. Et pource que ilz cuydoient leurs seignouries estre fermes & perdurables, Ilz par leurs forces submarchoient non pas seullement les autres moindres hommes, mais le les regardoye enorgueillir & rebeller comme folz & oultrageux⁴ contre dieu, le faiseur de toutes choses, dont le me esmerueillay; & quant le condamnoie lenragee folie de ces nobles hommes & femmes, & le comme esbahy consideroye la longue patience de dieu, le pere debonnaire, celle chose me vint en courage que le querroie. Certes le dis en mon cueur aucune chose nest pas plus prouffitable ne plus charitable a la communaulte des hommes & au salut pardurable, que de rappeller au droit chemin ceulx qui sont desuoyez se le puis, auquel rauoyement combien que aucuns hommes bien enlangagiez⁵ & nobles

¹ From du Pré's edition, 1483, with corrections and additions from MSS. Royal 18. D. VII. and Royal 20. C. IV.

² From MS. Royal 18. D. VII.

⁴ oultrageux] orgueilleux, du Pré.

³ From the two Royal MSS.

⁵ enlangagiez] alangagez, du Pré.

par aucunes saintes & doulces parolles y ayent traueille Iusques cy, toutesfois le pense que cest chose prouffitable se le me essaye oster telz hommes du somme qui est semblable a la mort & a les reueillier pour vitement ouurer, combien que le ne soye mie pareil aux anciens historiens. Et certain est que comme telz hommes desuoiez soient accoustumez de ensuiuir ordes delectacions, Ilz acoustumeront a grant peine leurs couraiges a ouyr les clers enseignemens de vertu, mais puis que Ilz ont acoustume de volentiers ouyr la doulceur des histoires Iay pense en mon cuer de demener mon present liure aulcunes fois par exemples, & de escrire quelle puissance ait dieu contre les orgueilleux qui appellent dieu fortune. Et affin que len ne doubte de quel temps ou de quelles personnes nous traictons en ce liure, nous respondons que des le commencement du monde Iusques a nostre temps nous voulons briefment demener & descrire en apert les fortunes & les cas daulcuns roys, ducz & [de] autres nobles hommes & femmes lesquelz fortune communement a abbaissiez¹ de leurs haultains esta[t]s, & si ne dis pas que le escripie de tous roys, ducz & autres nobles [hommes], car Il nest aucun engin si grant qui souffisist a si grant labeur & peine, mais des nobles hommes & femmes Il me souffist prendre aulcuns des plus nobles affin que quant les hommes verront par escript les princes du monde estre febles & vains, & les roys ferus & quotis Iusques a [la] terre par le Iugement de dieu, Ilz ayent congnoissance de la puissance diuine & de la feblesse et muablete de lestat de fortune, & que Ilz ayent mesure & attemprance² entre les bienuretez mondaines. Et affin que par le peril Iq adueni aux autres Ilz puissent pourueoir a leur mesme prouffit, & aussy affin que par continual racomptement des histoires le ne face ennuy a celui que ce liure lira: Iay determine tant pour prouffit comme pour delectacion de reprendre & blasmer les vices des personnes & de semer³ & mettre en aulcuns chapitres admonnestemens pour viure selon vertus, auquel hault commencement & pour suite le prie humblement celui enuers qui est toute puissance quil me vueille estre fauorable & que Il garde & deffende ce que Il me ottoiera escrire a la gloire de son nom.

LAURENCE'S PROLOGUE⁴

Le prologue du translateur.

Selon raison et bonnes meurs lomme soy excercant en aulcune science speculatiue ou aultre, peut honnestement muer son conseil [ou propos] de bien en mieulx attendue la mutacion des choses, des temps, & des lieux, & aussy peut vng potier

¹ abbaissiez] abessez, du Pré. ² attrempance, du Pré. ³ finer, du Pré.

⁴ From du Pré's edition. This is the preface to the second version.

casser & rompre aucun sien vaissel combien quil soit bien fait, pour lui donner autre forme qui luy semble meilleure. Et ceste licence de muer la chose en mieulx nest pas donnee a lomme pour seullement amender ou corriger sa propre oeuvre, ains mesmement est a chascun donnee pour ce faire en la besongne dau truy, mais que on le face par bonte de courage & par mouuement de pure¹ charite qui en soy ne contient enuye ne arrogance. Comme doncques la pieca le laurens de premier fait a lenhortement & requeste d'aucuns euz translate de latin en francois le moins mal que le peuz vng tresnotable & exquis liure de lehan boccace, des cas des nobles hommes & femmes, en la translation du quel lay ensuyui precisement & au iuste les sentences prinses du propre langage de l'auteur, qui est moult subtil & artificiel, & Il soit vray que mesmes aucuns de ceulx qui se dient clers & hommes lettrez seuffrent en eulx tresgrant dommage dignorance qui leur aduiant par deffaulte de trois sciences, qui enseignent droictelement, vrayement, & bellement parler, cestassauoir grammaire, logique, & rethorique, parquoy Il aduiant que les liures latins ditez & escriptz par les philosophes, poetes, & historiens bien enseigneuriez en toutes sciences humaines sont moult loing & desseruez de lentendement que dame nature donne communement aux hommes, [et] pource doncques [secourir a ce tres grant default il] conuient se me semble, que les liures latins en leurs translations soient mueuz & conuertis en tel langage que les liseurs & escouteurs diceulx puissent comprendre leffect de la sentence sans trop grant & trop long trauail de entendement. Le doncques selon le Iugement² commun en amendant, se le puis, la premiere translation du dit liure vueil sans riens condamner autre³ fois translater le dit liure. Affin cest assauoir que de tant quil sera plus cler & plus ouuert en sentences & en parolles, de tant Il delectera a lire & a escouter plusieurs hommes & femmes. Et par ce moyen avec laide de la grace diuine apres quilz congnoistront plus a plain la miserable condicion & le tourment & le muable estat des choses de fortune, Ilz les reputeront moins, ains les despriseront de tant plus & estimeront les choses diuines & celestes qui ont vraye seurete & loye pardurable. Et certain est que entre tous autres volumes escriptz par a[u]cteurs historiens, ce present liure parlant des doulces & ameres fortunes des nobles hommes & femmes est de tressingulier prix & de noble exemple de vertus, car Il fait presque mencion ou en long ou en brief des histoires de tous ceulx & celles qui depuis le commencement du monde

¹ de pure charite, Royal 18. D. VII. and Royal 20. C. IV. Du Pré has "de oeuvre de charite."

² le Iugement] lentendement, du Pré.

³ autre] vne autre, du Pré.

Iusques a Iehan roy de france, mort prisonnier en angleterre, ont eu puissances, richesses, dignitez, honneurs, & delectacions mondaines, car fortune a de coustume de abatre Ius & de froisser presque tous ceulx quelle a esleue au plus hault degre de sa roe; & par ainsy ce liure moult estroit & brief en parolles est entre tous [les] autres liures le plus ample & le plus long a le droit expliquer par sentences ramenables aux histoires, en faisant donc ceste beso[i]ngne longue, & espandue & recueillie de diuers historiens par le moyen de la grace diuine. Le vueil [principalement moy ficher] en deux choses cest assauoir mettre en cler langage les sentences du liure, & les histoires qui par lauteur¹ sont si briefment toucheez que Il nen met fors seulement les noms. Le les assouiray selon la verite des vieilz² historiens qui au long les escriurent. Et si ne vueil pas dire que Iehan boccace, a[u]cteur de ce liure, qui en son temps fut tresgrant & renomme historien, ait delaisse les dictes histoires par Ignorance de les non auoir sceues, ou par orgueil de les non daignier escrire, car Il les auoit si propices a la main & si ficheez en memoire, que Il les reputa communes & cogneues aux autres comme a soy. Affin doncques que le liure ait toutes ses parties et soit complet en soy, le les mettray briefment sans delaisser que trespou le texte de lacteur. Si prie dieu³ que a ceste oeuvre commencer, moyenner & finer, me vueille donner faueur & ayde. Et si requier les hommes que benigne-ment me suportent & excusent en moy donnant pardon des choses moins bien faictes ou dictes.

LAURENCE'S DEDICATION TO THE DUKE OF BERRY⁴

[This appears only in Laurence's second version.]

A Puissant noble et excellent prince Iehan filz de Roy de france, duc de berry et dauguerne, Conte de poitou, destampes de boulongne & dauuergne, Laurens de premierfait, clerc et vostre mains digne secretaire et serf de bonne foy, toute obediencia et subieccion deue comme a mon tresredoubte seigneur et bienfauteur, et agreablement recepuoir le labour de mon estude et benignement excuser la petitesse de mon engin au resgart de la grant besoigne de vostre commandement par moy ia pieca entreprise et nouuelement finie. ¶ Combien que par vostre especial mandement Je aye soubz la confiance de vostre naturele benignite et en espoir de uostre gracieux aide

¹ lauteur] les acteurs, du Pré.

² vieilz] haulx, du Pré.

³ dieu] a dieu, du Pré.

⁴ From MS. Royal 18. D. VII. (R), fol. 2, ff., with a few corrections from MSS. Royal 20. C. IV. (R 2) and Add. 18,750 (Add.)

et confort entrepris le dongereux et long trauail de la trans-
lacion de vng tresexquis et singulier volume, des cas des nobles
hommes et femmes escript et compile par Iehan bocacce de
Certald, Iadis homme moult excellent et expert en anciannes
hystoires et toutes aultres sciences humaines et diuines. Neant-
moins pour lexcellence de celle ancienne Royale lignie dont
vous prenes naissance, et aussi de la noblesse de voz meurs
et uertus qui a bon droit desseruent pardurable beneurete
enuers dieu, et enuers les hommes louenge et renomnee. ¶ Ia
long temps a que en obeissant a voz commandemens le tournai
mon courage, a Iceulx acomplir ainsi comme le doy. Cest
asauoir a translater en langaige francoys le volume dessus
dit, contenant en latin neuf liures particuliers racomptans ou
en long ou en brief les malheureux cas des nobles hommes et
femmes qui depuis adam et eue, les premiers de tous hommes
monterent ou hault degre de la Roë de fortune, iusques au
temps de tres excellent et noble prince Iehan, le premier de
ce nom, vostre tres loyal pere, Iadiz Roy des francoys, du
quel le cas tresbriefment raconte, fait la fin de ce present volume.
Et pource donques que ce present liure est intitule des cas
des nobles hommes et femmes, et que les cas semblent auoir
dependance et cause efficient de par fortune, ie veul premiere-
ment et en brief selon mon aduiz yci dire la cause pour quoi
toutes les dignites et honneurs, richesses, puissances et glo[ri]e
mondaines¹ samblent estre et soient subiectes a fortune, qui
tousdiz tourne sa Roë en transmuant les choses de ce monde.
Et apres ie diray vne prouuable maniere par quoy chascuin
homme et femme puissent eulx affranchir et exempter des
cas et des trebuschetz de fortune.

¶ Pour quoy choses mondaines sont subiectes a fortune.

¶ Pour declarer donques la premiere de ces deulx choses:
Sauoir affiert que au commencement homme et femme furent
de dieu creez avecques entiere beneurete et telement parfaiz
tant en corps comme en ame, que neiz les sages croient que
adam et eue, parens de tout humain lignaige, estoient immortelz
et impassibles se il[z] eussent bien gardeee celle sainte et seule
loy que dieu leur ot donnee ou paradis de delices. Maiz pour
ce que contre eulx maismes esquelz estoit toute humaine nature.
Ilz getterent vng hazard par lequel ilz perdirent les princi-
paulx doarres² tant de corps comme de ame. ¶ Lenfainte
et le comptent³ de celle seule loy entre les innumerables mauix
et infinis dogmages en engendra vng tres grief, par quoi toute
hu[m]aine creature⁴ deuint subiecte a fortune et a sa moquerie.
Car deslors dieu souffri que les choses du monde qui atous
estoient pareillement communes de uindrent propres selonc

¹ mondaine Add., R 2.

² douaires R 2, Add.

³ contempt R 2.

⁴ nature R 2, Add.

la couuoitise de celui qui par violence et force les occupoit pour soy. Et pource que tous les couraiges des hommes au regart de leur premier commencement sont tous semblables, lun couuoita celle mesme chose que lautre occupoit. Maiz pource que deulx ne peuent ensemble possider vne mesme chose, Il a couuenu que lun dechies de son desir. Et celui qui obtient ce que il desiroit semble estre iuchiez¹ ou hault degre de la roe de fortune, qui comme chamberiere de dieu pour la punicion de leurs pechies, vne foiz haulse et autre foiz abaisse hommes et femmes sans discreccion ne aduiz et non pas selon la quantite des merites des hommes. Maiz par vne confuse maniere dont les causes sont euidens a dieu. Maiz les hommes comme ignorans de lordrenance diuine ne peuent congnoistre telles causes. Quant donquez lomme par quelconque moien monte du bas estat ou hault on lappelle beneyreux, Et le descendement on le appelle ou cas ou malheurete puis que celui qui descent sefforce au contraire et que cest maulgre soy. Par quoy cestui liure est apelle des cas des nobles hommes et fenmes. ¶ Et comme donques iuste punicion ait este cause par quoi les hommes et les biens de ce monde furent et sont soubzmiz a fortune et a sa moquerie, en tant que les estatz de toutes choses mondaines sont enfermes et soubdainement muables, et en espical des haultes choses trop plus que des moyennes. En la punicion des deulx premiers parens qui orgueilleusement enfraingnirent la løy a eulx donnee, la iustice de dieu fut estroitement et droitement gardee parce que tous participent la moquerie de fortune qui se loue en esleuant et en trebuchant les hommes. Car puis² que adam & eue mistrent en rafle toute la bienheurete humaine en cuidant icelle agrandir et en desobeissant Il[z] perdirent leur chance, Ilz deslierent a tous le malheur que auoit atachie dieu a vne forte coulompne et soubmistrent eulx et toute leur succession aus tournoiements de la roe de fortune et a ses trebuchetz. Il[z] ouurirent les portes a tous pechies. Il[z] dechacierent de ce monde les uertus et geterent en terre la semence de tous vices que lamais neussent este nommez ne congneuz entre hommes. Et ainsi comme toute nature humaine estoit a donc en deux, adam et eue, qui par leur franc arbitre hazarderent toute leur beneinete,³ aussi nous tous descendus deulx sommes par droit compaignons de celle perte. Car se il[z] eussent gaigne et actaint la chose aquoy il[z] tendoient, chascun en vouldist estre compaignon et parsonnier. Aulcuns par aduerture sebahissent pour quoy tant de nobles hommes et femmes cy apres racontes chayrent si miserablement du tres hault au tres bas. Et mesmement alain le pouete se complaint, pource que les iniustes et mauues hommes sont tres souuent esleues

¹ enchiez Add.² depuis Add., R 2.³ bienheurete R 2.

aux tres haultx estatx du monde. Et a ces deulx pointz, Alain respont vraiment et embrief, Cest assauior, que fortune les esleua en hault afin quil[z] descendissent par plus grief trebuchet qui les desrompe & froisse selon la pesanteur de leurs iniquites; puis donquez que iay briefment monstre que les cinq dons de fortune qui contiennent tous les biens mondains et transsitoires sont droittement par ordrenance diuine soubz mis a fortune et a sa moquerie. Je vueil monstrer cleres voyes et manieres par les queles tant hommes comme femmes puissent eulx et leurs choses exempter et affranchir des cas et de trebuchetz de fortune.

Comment lomme affranchist soy et ses choses de fortune.

Et pource que ceste matere est dongereuse et obscure enuers aucuns, premierement ie suppose pour uray que se les biens de aucun homme ne lui semblent tres grans et tres larges il est meschant et poure combien que il feust seigneur de tout le monde. Et celui est homme malheureux et poure qui selon sa droicte conscience ne iuge soy estre bienheureux, la soit ce que tout le monde feust soubz sa seignorie. Et cellui nest beneureux ne parfait qui par son propre Iugement ne le cuide estre, Et riens ne vault se aucun reputé soy beneureux qui est plain de richesses, se il vit et ait uescu deshonestement et mal, et celui na en soy aucune felicité qui est seigneur de maintes choses, Maiz il est serf de plusieurs. ¶ Ces cinq choses dessus dictes ne cheent Iamaiz en homme sage. Se donques homme veult soy affranchir et exempter de malheur Il lui conuient auoir la uertu de sapience qui en soy seule contient tous biens sans commixcion de mal. ¶ Le sage homme est en soy si parfait et si bienheureux que neiz pour bien viure Il na besoing Iamy.¹ Le sage nest point subget a fortune, comme Senèque le preue par vne exemple de demetrius ancian Roy de Surie, qui par tyrannie occupa main[t]s pays et ardi maintes Cites de parthie et de oriant. En lune des cites de parthie estoit adonc vng moult sage philo[s]ophe nomme Stilbon, qui auoit femme, enfans, possessions et aultres Richesses temporelles. Toutes ses choses furent arses, perdues & degastees par le tirant Demetrius et ses gens. Maiz Stilbon tout seul eschapa bienheureux. Or aduint que demetrius lui demanda sil auoit perdu aucunes siennes choses, et il vraiment et sagement respondi, quil nauoit riens perdu, aincois dist: tous mes biens sont auesques moy. La responce de Stilbon fist doubteux le tirant en tant que Il cuida que stilbon leust vaincu, pour ce que il dist toutes mes choses demeurent auecques moy; et uerite disoit, car auecques lui estoient les uertus Iustice, prudence, magnanimite, attemprance² et la doulce memoire de ses uertueuses oeures continuees sans les queles aucun ne

¹ Iamy] damy R.

² attemprance] attremprance R.

puet Iuger soy estre beneureux. Car homme indigne et mauuaiz ne puest auoir sentement de iuger soy estre beneureux. Ains conuient que tous iours et nom pas en pou de temp quil ait bien uesteu selon le droit iugement de soy mesmes. ¶ Et aussi Il nest homme aqui ces choses ne déplaisent fors que au sage. Car toute folie et aussi chascun fol engendre souuent a soy mesmes desplaisir et ennuy.

Comment lacteur parle du cas de leglise presente et des prestres.

Helas, las, et troys foys las, par faulte de ceste sapience, mere et nourrice de toutes vertus diuines et humaines cheirent Adam et eue, et par eulx est toute leur succession habandonnee au cas & trebuschetz de fortune. Quelz cuers tant soient durs pourroient soy abstenir de douleur? Quelz yelx tant soient secz se porroient soi abstenir de larmes quant les hommes voient clerement et congnoissent les cas ia aduenus des troys estatz du monde? Cest assauoir, des prestres, des nobles hommes, aussi des laboureurs de cestui temps. ¶ Car quant aux prestres qui par crasse ignorance ne congnoissent eulx estre cheuz de leur ancianne beneurete. Le di, sauue la paix, des bons que ainsi comme dame chastete qui est la singuliere et souueraine beaulte des femmes apres le temps du iuste roy Saturnus. Chai et tomba ou temps de son filz Iupiter Roy de Crete par les excès et superfluités qui suruindrent en delicieuses viandes en a tours orgueilleux et sumptueux baptissemens de maisons et en aultres adminicules seruans a seule deshonneste delectacion. Aussi lancianne sanctite des prestres est cheue et versee par la trop grant habondance de Richesses mondaines qui soubz vmbre de la saintite de iesus crist et de aulcuns siens disciples ont este donnees aux prestres par aulcuns princes mondains qui a aulcuns les tollirent pour les donner aux prestres ausquelz il vaulsist miex selon lancienne saintite viure des saintz decimes qui sont deuz par droit diuin que eulx vouldre et pourrir de dens orgueilleux palays ou fiens des pechies avecques leurs grans et dommageuses richesses. ¶ Helas, noble et excellent prince, ne doit len bien gemir, douler et plourer le cas et le tombement des prestres de cestui temps, qui en tout ou en partie forsignent et desuoient de la sante des anciens, qui par leurs larmes et oracions soloient mouoir dieu et les uertus des cieulx contre les aduersaires de la foy catholique. ¶ Les sains prestres anciens sont en leurs successeurs telment dessaintiz que maintenant len forge heaulmes de mittres, len fait lances des croces, len fait des uestemens sacerdotalz haubergons, plattes et aultres pieces darmes baitailleresses pour trauailler et asseruir les hommes simples et innocens. Les prestres de cestui temps poursuient armes et pauillons, il font [l]arsins et violences pupliques; Ilz ont plaisir et loye despandre sang humain; Ilz sefforcent de occuper

la seigneurie du monde contre la sentence du vray *iesus*, filz de dieu, disant en leuuangile, que son Roiaulme nest pas de cestui monde. ¶ Les prestres en cestui temps emplient les sales des roys, les palays et les tables en delaisand leurs eglises, dont ilz se nomnent espoux. Ilz delaissent les choses saintes et poursuient les prophanes; Ilz sont pastours sans paistre ne congnoistre les brebis: Eulx que leglise fist nobles exerceant vilz offices; Ilz desseruent par procureurs et vicaires qui deux foyz tendent les simples brebiettes: La premiere tonture est aux vicaires, et la seconde est au pastour surnomme. ¶ Par le bannissement de celle ancianne saintcite, Cent malheureux cas sont aduenus, car le deable qui par les merites de la mort du bon *iesus* et de ses victorieux martirs et glorieux confesseurs auoit este loies en labisme denfer par les nouueaux pechiez des nouueaux prestres, et du simple peuple qui est adheurtes en leur oeuvres, est ia pieca des loies et sailli hors denfer. Et ia defait comme loup violent et forsene atraict a soy, las moy tresgrant partie des brebis commises en la garde du bon pastour S. Pierre, par quoy le bon *iesus*, vray espoux et pastour de sainte eglise, a retiree sa main du gouuernement de elle. Et est ia en vostre temps la chose atant venue, par le pechie principalement des prestres, et secondement du peuple que par eulx la loy *christienne* est presque perie maintenant. La Robe de *iesus* sans piece et sans cousture, a este, par xxxij ans trencee en deulx, puis en troys pieces. ¶ Et ou saint et noble corps deglise dont *iesus* est le seul chief sont seureues troys testes a maniere de ung monstre. Et ne remaint que a trespou, que la nef de saint pierre ne ait este absorbie et noiee es floz de lamer de ce monde par le uice des nantonniers qui la deuoient tenir ou port de repos et de seurte. En brief, content le cas de leglise militant, excellent, noble et puissant prince, Je prie humblement vous et tous aultres que uous me excuses benignement. Car Je entens dire sobrement les choses que vous et Cent Mil hommes aues veues et vncores voyez: et Je assez le voy se lay sentement ne memoire. Et pource ie ne allegue aulcuns autteurs ne liures, car ces paroles ont fontaine et naissance de vne familiere epistre escripte par Iehan Boccace, premier aucteur de ce liure. En celle epistre Il pleure & regrette le cas de mondaine noblesse.

Lauteur parle du cas de noblesse mondaine.

O dist il, bon dieu de sapience qui tout sces et congnoys, enseigne moy, Je te prie, en quele partie du monde soit reposte noblesse dont les empereurs & roys portent les tiltres principaulx? car Je layquise en lostel de Cesar Roy des Rommains, de qui les ancesseurs par longs labours et par exquisas diligences et par nobles oeuvres de victorieuses armes Iadis conquistrent la monarchie du monde. ¶ Maiz las moy, lai trouue que l'empereur de ce temps a oublie, ou au moins il dissimule,

les proesses et loanges et les magnifiques besoingnes de ses predecesseurs. Il a laissie le glorieux estude de Mars¹ le dieu des batailles et sest du tout adonne a bachus le dieu du vin; Il a delaissie la riche, ancianne et notable Italie es mains de mil tirans, et sest ale repondre & dormir entre les naiges et grans hanaps de vin en celle part dallemaigne qui gist au coste destre deuers soleil couchant ou derrain anglet du monde. ¶ O las, bon dieu, com poure miroer de noblesse, quel exemple de cheualerie pour les roys et aultres princes du monde quant il[z] voient fetardie, peresse, oysiuete et entonnrisseur en celui qui deust a l'exemple de soy en horter, esmouuoir, semondre et esueiller les autres princes a maintenir et deffendre les conquestz de leurs noblez ancestrez et a Iceulx amplifier² et accroistre. Du corps de lempereur ainsi comme ou soleil soloient liure et resplendir toutes uertus qui appartement se monströient par nobles euures dehors les vertus soient de corps ou de courage, qui ne monstrent au dehors leurs propres oeuvres ne rendent homme plus noble ne que la lune enlumine le monde quant la terre sest mise entre le soleil & la face de la lune. ¶ O noblesse mondaine, fille des nobles meurs & nourrie du lait des saintes vertuz qui est celui qui ta vanny des hostelz voiaux, & aussi des aultres princes? Tu respons que longuement tu habitas nomme comme hostesse en hostel des roys francoys, et que illenc volentiers demouroies, maiz que icelle erreur cessast parquoy aucuns folement cuiderent & encore dient que seulement ce nest pas laide chose a vng roy congnoistre les figures des lettres, maiz il cuident et dient que cest tresgrant empirement de maieste Royale. Maiz telz hommes sont folz qui ainsi dient et qui condempnent telle chose es Roys, parquoy les hommes ignobles sont droittement anoblis; car droit office de Roy et daultres princes est chacun iour seoir en siege iudicatoire, ouir paciemment et sagement examiner les merites des causes sur les controuersies de leurs hommes subgetz, et rendre droit aux parties selon balance de iustice. ¶ Deffendre les Innocens et punir les mauuaiz, procurer principalement le publique proufit, et apres le bien priue que len appelle demaine pource que il vient des mains et du labour du peuple en la main du prince, qui de sa puissant main doit garder et deffendre le peuple Impotent. Et certes clere chose est, que office royal ne puest homme sans science et sans art droittement [conduire et] excercer, Ainsi comme vng patron de nauire ne puet bonnement condu[i]re en mer tempestueuse et vndoiant vne grant nef sans gouuernail, sans voile, ne sans remmes. ¶ Et auoir en tour soy hommes lettres et nobles commis en offices publiques, ne monstre pas asses plainement la sapience ne la noblesse du roy, ou daultre prince, se il mesme nest lettres et expert en

¹ de Mars] maiz R.² amplifier] employer R.

oeuvre de sapience et en discipline darmes, cest vng corbiau vestu de plumes de paon. Et prince sans lettres se assortie a lasne qui coronne porte, Et sil nest aulcun homme bon iuge fors que es choses que il congnoist lamaiz archier ne tire droit sa flesche, se il na aulcun signe deuant soy. ¶ O dieu, quel grant louenge et beneurete seroit a vng roy ou aultre prince congnoistre les causes de toutes choses avec celle noblesse se aulcune soit que viengne aux enfans de par leurs peres. Car ainsi comme vng iardin con plante de diuerses especes darbres & herbes flories et oudourans est plus noble et plus precieulx, aussi sont enfans de nobles hommes qui sont nourris entre les fleurs des sciences & odeurs des vertus, et qui ont longuement este repeuz des fruitz. Attendu que noblesse nest pas hereditaire; car elle prent naissance de vertuz et bonnes oeures; Et combien que en punicion du pechie des premiers parens Adam & Eue seruitute par souffrence de dieu soit introduicte entre les hommes, en tant que les aulcuns seruent et les aultres seignorient nompas selon droit naturel ne ciuil, maiz par le droit des gens qui contient douze choses, dont seruitute est lune, neantmoins aulcuns nobles de ce temps sont si descheus de lestat de uraye noblesse que follement Ilz cuident eulz et non aultres estre hommes et que ilz puissent faire pareillement toutes choses permises et deffendues sans encourir ne diffame ne peine combien que il soit autrement. ¶ Car tout vice de courage est plus griefment a punir de tant comme le pecheur est en plus grant degre. Et se dieu sage et iuste seuffre et veult que les roys et princes et aultres nobles aient espee de puissance sur leurs subgetz Il toute uoies ne veult quilz excercent fureur ne cruaulte, car aux nobles principalement affiert auoir clemence qui met equitte deuant rigueur et veult plus encliner a merci que a uengence sans faillir hors des termes de iustice, sans laquelle Roys ne sont roys ne royaulmes. Ains sont tirans cruelz et tirannies. ¶ Par ainsi donques appert que le plus grief cas et le plus dampnable trebuschetz de noblesse cest forsbanir et dechassier sciences et vertus de lostel des roys, et aultres princes ainsi comme il aperra clerement par le compte des cas des nobles malheureux descriptz en ce present volume.

Ci parle lacteur du cas des laboureux champestres.

Or vienge a dire le cas des saintz laboureurs et tresbien fortunes, Maiz que ilz aient congnoissance de la quantite des biens que fortune leur donne. Et certes, puissant, noble et excellent prince, es choses dessus dictes en ce present prologue Iusquez yci len me doit tenir pour racompteur des paroles de Iehan Boccace en vne sienne familiere epistre: et chacun aussi congnoist la verite des deux cas de prestrise et de mondaine noblesse. ¶ Maiz quant au tiers cas present parquoy ie vueil monstrier le tresbuchet des laboureurs, et de la chose rustique.

Le prens uirgile pour mon auteur et maistre. Aulcun donc ne se merueille se le dy que lestat des laboureurs et de leurs choses ait este et soit sujet au cas de fortune: Combien que commun prouerbe soit que aulcun homme ne chiet, fors celui que siet en hault. Car en toutes choses sur quoy enuie gete ses yeulx dame fortune y entreprennt seignourie, la soit ce aussi que lendieque laboureurs sont de si bas estat que fortune ne les pourroit abaisser. Maiz sauue la paix de ceulx qui ainsi dient car se les laboureurs et leurs choses rustiques feussent ou [en]corez soubz celle beneurete et franchise en quoy Iadiz il furent et oncorez deussent estre selon les loyx anciennes approuuees diuines et humaines, Il nest aulcun aultre estat qui ait en soy teles excellances en profis en delitz et en honnestetes publiques et priues comme la vie et lestat des laboureurs, par qui les hommes sont soustenus et nouris en necessite de corps et les sacrifices diuins sont admenistres selon la religion publique. ¶ O bon dieu, quant Iadiz les cites tamboissoient par discensions, riotes et batailles cruelles, quant chastiaux et chastelains guerroient les vn[s] contre les aultres. Adonc les laboureurs contens de leurs propres biens viuoient et delectable et continuelle paix en mutuelle amour sanz souffrir aulcun dommage, rapine ou violence, ne en corps ne en biens: On laissoit iadiz cites murees et chasteaux assiz sur roches pour eschapper mesaises et perilz qui illenques souruenoient, Et venoit len aux villaiges ouuers et bas assiz pour y trouuer aisances et seurtés, Et pour auoir mon dit en labourages terrestres sont prouffilz et delectacions Innumerables si haultement descriptz et racomptes par tulle, noble orateur rommain, en son liure de vieillesse le quel vous auez comme ie croy oy diligemment et entendu, que ie nen vueil presentement escripre, Maiz le vueil neantmoins auec vostre bon plaisir plourer apres vous les cas des saintz laboureurs de la chose rustique pource que la chose ¹ publique et la religion de vostre noble couraige se doit moult encliner a secourir aux choses tres dommageuses aux hommes detestables enuers dieu. ¶ Las moy bon dieu, quele moquerie, quel monstre en bonnes meurs, quel abuz de iustice est ce maintenant veoir les hommes laboureurs, simples innocens sans cruaulte et sans armes, qui nuit et iour demeurent en pures maisonnettes si sobrement, repeuz et vestuz de leurs propres labours que a paines Il appaisent la faim, et de vilz palestreaux Il cueurcent leurs membres recourbes et frossiez par continuel labour, Ilz qui purement nourrissent leurs femmes et enfans afin de les endurcir aux saints labours de la terre, Il[z] departent tout le temps de leur vie en trois pars: Premièrement a dieu seruir en prieres et sacrifices, a tirer par continuel labour des boyaulx de la terre toutes choses

¹ chose] pitie Add., R.

necessaires a la vie, Et a multiplier par leurs saintz mariages succession de lignie. Certes en ces iij choses na riens qui ne soit accordant a la loy diuine et humaine. La vie des laboureurs champestres droittement examinee et congneue sambla tele aux ancians nobles hommes, philosophes et princes quilz instituerent par editz et par loix que ce lui seroit repute et pugny comme sacrilege qui offendroit et rauiroit leurs labours ou leurs biens feust en champ ou en ville. Et pource furent ilz et oncores sont appellez saintz. ¶ Mais, puissant, noble et excellent prince, escoutez sil vous plaist le miserable cas de ces laboureurs et de leur chose rustique aux quelz se par vous ou aultre aiant puissance, volente et sagesse nest briefment secouru et pourueu en vostre temps, de remede couuenable. Dieu, qui ne het¹ aulcun et qui de tous a merci et en especial des bons simples laboureurs et aultres hommes iustes, Il retirera sa main a sa beniuolance des prestres et des nobles qui ne gardent misericorde, ne Iustice enuers eulx, ne enuers les aultres. Ains les soubz marchent et foulent. Il aduenra que dieu leur osterà, Raison dentendement, honneur de ancian estat et les vestira de confusion. Il espressira les tenebres de leurs yuelx; Il mettra trebuschetz a leurs piez afin quilz cheent du tres hault au tres bas. ¶ Il ramenra a neant ou transporterà en aultres mains leurs orgueilleuses richesses, honneurs, gloires, dignites et puissances. Ie ne vous persuade ne admonnestè pas car vous aduisez asses par les yeulx de vostre pensee & ceulx de vostre corps, quele et com grant iniquite, seu[e]r[i]te et austerite ce soit voir les simples laboureurs proufitables a tous et nuisans a nul homme estre par apperte violence [oppresser et] dechasses de leurs propres² maisons, mutiles, batus, Iniuries de fait et de paroles; leurs fames a hontages, leurs filles corrompuees, et leur aultres choses transglouties et gastees ou mises a rampson par les nobles hommes darmes de ce temps, ausquelz les roys et princes deputent ou au moins doiuent commettre la garde et la deffense des saintz laboureurs et de leur chose rustique. ¶ De leurs gaings et labours sont comblees et esplendies les tables des Roys, des princes et daultres quelz conques nompas seulement hommes mayz bestes et oyseaulx soient priuees ou sauuaiges. Et en eulx est tele frugalite et sobresse que pour aisier et secourir les aultres Ilz seuffrent volontairement disettes et me-saises: Ilz portent sanz Reclam le Iou de seruitute et le grief faiz de truage, Ilz regrettent seulement que ilz ne possident mie en seurte et en paix ce pou qui leur demeure apres dame sainte eglise et leurs aultres seigneurs satisfaitz de leurs rentes, demaines et subsidies. ¶ Entre les trois griefz tresbuchetz de tele beneurte comme laboureurs ont liniquite et malice

¹ het] hait, Add.² propres] poures, R 2.

des ministres des deulx iuridicions, eccliasique et seculiere cest la plus mortele plaie qui plus dedens les naure et le diluge qui plus les sangloutist. Car a hommes corumpus de tous vices en ce temps est commise ladministracion et lespee de Iustice a Iuger les simples et Innocens laboureurs. ¶ Es cours iudicatoires¹ sont aduocat² et procureurs bien instruitz en baratz et cauteles conseilans, a mouuoir et nourrir plaiz et controuersies soit a bon droit et ² a tort, afin de tirer ou gouffre de leur couuoitise les deniers des parties plaidoians soubz faulse couleur de auoir loyaulment conseil³ et deffendu les causes. Las moy, ne souffisoit Il assez selon les saintz droitz canons que les prelatz aians les premieres dignitez en sainte eglise eussent comment³ il ont leurs diligens Archediacles pour aduiser et enquerir par les Cites et dioceses les crimes et excès parpetres par les hommes et iceulx rapporter, aux oreilles des prelatz des lieux, afin de iceulx punir et corriger selon iustice. Certes il souffisoit a dieu, maiz non pas au deable ne aux siens, car afin que soubz fardee Iustice toute la substance des simples laboureurs viengne a saouler la faim de la mauldite couuoitise des Euesques et aultres hommes deglise. Ilz mettent officiers en leurs cours, hommes barbares et sans pitie, sans bonnes meurs, sans uertus et sans sciences qui nuit et Iour espient par queles voiez Ilz puissent accuser et traire en Iugement simples et Innocens hommes plus dignes destre absolz que condempnes. ¶ Pource, excellent, noble et puissant prince, ce que le scay vostre singulier plaisir et toute vostre estude tournes en la partie de commune bonte et que aux malheureux cas dessus dicts vous corame puissant et sage, poues et sauez pourueoir et secourir. Et que vos salutaires commandemens attendue lauctorite de vostre noble et commandable vieillesse, peeuent souuerainement reparer les choses deformees et confermer les bonnes, le au surcroys de tout ce liure ay mis fablement ce prologue a fin que chacun congnoisse que vous nestes pas seulement nez pour vous, Maiz pour profiter a tous en ouurant la voye deschaper les cas de fortune muable et au[e]juglesse parce que vous abandonnez a tous le plain entendement du volume dessus dit, du quel par vostre commandement lay entrepris la charge de le translater de latin en langage francoys. ¶ Si vueillez donques excellent, noble et puissant prince, mon tres singulier bien-faiteur et redoubte seigneur, deffendre ma cause comme la vostre propre contre les enuieux, qui sans iuste cause voudront malicieusement contrestre a ceste vostre oeuvre qui par moy est ourdie et terue au moins mal selon mon pouoir. Et pour leuident n[e]cessite et pour le iuste desir que lay dauoir bon

¹ iudicatoires] Iudiciaries, R 2.² et] ou, Add., R 2.³ comment] comme, Add., R 2.

commancement et de meilleur moyen et de tres bonne fin en ceste besoigne qui ne peuvent daultre venir fors de celui qui sans en auoir moins donne a tous ces dons de grace. ¶ Je prie, appelle et requier dieu a qui fortune obeit, qui trebuche et drece les hommes selon leurs pechiez et uertus que par sa surhabundant grace Il enrichisse mon ame de science sans errer, et ma bouche de paroles accordans a verite et me donne bonnes meurs sanz desroguer a la diuine loy: Et quil conduie ma plume diligemnent escriuant sanz langoureuse paresse au commun prouffit de touz et a la loange diuine.

THE FALL OF PRINCES

BOOK I.

PROLOGUE.

[Here begynneth the book callyd I. Bochas descriuyng the falle of Pryncys pryncessys and othir nobles translatid in to Inglish bi Iohn Ludgate Monke of the Monastery of seynt Edmundes Bury atte commaundement of the worthi prynce Humfrey duk of Gloucestre begynnyng at Adam & endyng with kyng Iohne take prisonere in Fraunce bi Prynce Edward.]¹

HE that whilom dede his dilligence [p. 1] Lydgate says
The book of Bochas in Frensh to translate that Laurence
Out of Latyn, he callid was Laurence; de Premierfait
The tyme trewli remembrid and the date, began his
The yere* whan kyng Iohn thoruh his mortal fate 4 translation
Was prisoner brouht to this regioun, in the year
Whan he first gan on this translacioun. that King
John of
France
was brought
prisoner to
England.

In his prologe affermyng off resoun, 8 As craftsmen
Artificeres hauyng exêrcise use their
May chaunge and turne bi good discrecioun powers of
Shappis, formys, and newli hem deuyse, invention,
Make and vnmake in many sondry wyse, 12
As potteres, which to that craft entende,
Breke and renewe ther vesselis to a-mende.

Thus men off craft may off due riht,
That been inuentiff & han experience, 16 so may
Fantasien in ther inward siht skilled clerks
Deuises newe thoruh ther excellence; amend and
Expert maistres han therto licence improve their
Fro good to bettir for to chaunge a thyng, 20 originals,
And semblabli these clerkis in writyng,

Thyng that was maad of auctours hem beform,
Thei may off newe fynde and fantasie,

3. he] *erased in H.*
16. han] have H.

5. The yere] Yeer B, R, H, There J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 1 a.

Out of old chaff trie out ful cleene corn, 24
 Make it more fressh and lusti to the cie,
 Ther subtil witt and ther labour applie,
 With ther colours agreable off hewe,
 Make olde thynges for to seeme newe. 28

if they are
 modest and
 free from
 envy,

Afforn prouydid that no presumpcioun
 In ther chaungyng haue noon auctorite,
 And that meeknesse haue dominacioun,
 Fals Envie that she not present be; 32
 But that ther ground with parfit charite
 Conueied be to ther auantage,
 Trewli rootid a-myd of ther corage.

as was
 Laurence.

Thus Laurence fro hym envie excludid, 36
 Thoun toforn hym translatid was this book,
 Withynne hymself he fulli hath concludid,
 Vpon that labour whan he caste his look,
 He wolde amende it; but first he forsook 40
 Presumpcioun, and took to hym meeknesse,
 In his prologe as he doth expresse.

He excelled
 as a writer
 of French,

In which processe, lik as-I am lerid,
 He in his tyme off cunningg dede excelle 44
 In ther language, therfore he was requerid
 Off estatis, which gan hym eek compelle,
 A-mong hem holde off rethorik the welle,
 To vndirfonge this labour they hym preie, 48
 And* ther request he lowli dede obeie.

but felt it
 to be a great
 task to write
 the Fall of
 Princes.

Ful weel he felte the labour was notable,
 The fall of nobles, with eueri circumstaunce,
 From ther lordshippes, dreedful and vnstable, 52
 How that thei fill to putte in remembraunce,
 Therin to shewe Fortunys variaunce,
 That othre myhte as in a merour see
 In worldly worshepe may be no surete. 56

No rose is
 without a
 thorn,
 no man so
 high in his
 estate that
 he may not
 fall.

Bi exaample, as there is no rose
 Spryngyng in gardeyns, but ther be sum thorn,
 Nor fairer blosme than Nature list dispose,
 Than may ther beute, as men ha[ue] seyn toforn, 60
 With bittir wyndes be fro ther braunchis born,

24. ful] wol H, well R 3, wel P — out] om. H 5. 46. gan] can R.
 49. And] And he B — he] om. R — lowly he hede J.
 58. gardeyns] gardyn H. 61. fro] frome H.

Nor noon so hih in his estat contune
Fre fro thawaityng & daunger of Fortune.

Wherefore Bochas for a memoriall,
Consid[e]ryng the grete dignitees
Off worldli pryncis in ther power roiall,
Grete emperours, estatis and degrees,
How Fortune hath cast hem from ther sees;
Namly such as koude hemsilff nat knowe,
Ful sodenly to make hem lyn ful lowe.

64 Bochas was
the original
compiler

This said auctour, auise and riht sad,
Hath gadred out, with rethoriques sueete,
In dyuers bookes which that he hath rad,
Off philisophres and many an old poete,
Besied hym bothe in cold and hete*
Out to compile and writen as he fond
The fall of nobles in many dyuers lond.

of the Fall
of Princes.
72

Vpon whos book in his translacioun
This seid Laurence rehersith in certeyn,
And holdith this in his opynyoun,
Such language as open is and pleyn
Is more acceptid, as it is offte seyn,
Than straunge termys which be nat vndirstande,
Namly to folkis that duellyn vp-on lande.

76

Laurence
held that it
is good to
write simply
and clearly,
80

And* he seith eek, that his entencioun
Is to a-menden, correcten and declare;
Nat to condempne off no presumpcioun,
But to supporte, pleynli, and to spare
Thyng touchid shortly off the story bare,
Vndir a stile breeff and compendious,
Hem to prolonge whan thei be vertuous:

[p. 2] and he said
that he would
amplify the
story wherever
necessary;
88

For a story which is nat pleynli told,
But constreynyd vndir wqordes fewe
For lak off trouthe, wher thei be newe or old,
Men bi report kan nat the mater shewe;
These ookis grete be nat douz ihewe
First at a strok[e], but bi long processe,
Nor longe stories a woord may not expresse.

92 for a narrative
must not be
too condensed.

96

63. fro] frome H — of dawnger & H. 68. from] fro R.
75. and] and in B, H, & eke in R 3.
85. And] As B, R, — eek] also J. 94. newe] yong H.
95. report] reprot R.

He wrote

For which, pleynli, this noble translatur
 Caste off purpos these stories for to write, 100
 And for to doon his dilligent labour
 As thei fill in ordre to endite,
 That men afftir myhte hemsilff delite,
 Auentures, so as thei fill in deede, 104
 Off sundry pryncis to beholde & reede,

that men may
see that all
things are
transitory.

And haue a maner contemplacioun,
 That thynges all, wher Fortune may atteyne,
 Be transitory of condicioun; 108
 For she off kynde is hasti & sodeyne,
 Contrarious hir cours for to restreyn,
 Off wilfulnesse she is so variable, 111
 Whan men most truste, than is she most chaungable.

Since Fortune
is deceitful,
we must set
our hearts on
divine and
permanent
things.

And for hir chaung and for hir doubilnesse,
 This Bochas biddith* that men sholde encline
 Sette ther hertis, void off vnstabilnesse,
 Vpon thynges which that been deuyne, 116
 Where-as ioie perpetueli doth shyne
 Withoute eclipsyng in that heuenli see,
 Void off all cloudis off mūtabilitye.

Bochas wrote
both of joy
and sorrow
and of
Fortune's
mutability.

Among, this Bochas writith off suetnesse 120
 And off materes that lusti been and glade,
 And sumwhile he writt off wrechidnesse,
 And how Fortune kan floure & afftir fade —
 Ioie vndir cloude, prosperite in the shade, 124
 Entirchaungyng off euery maner thyng,
 Which that men feele, heer in this world lyvyng.

He told the
story of all
estates,

And in his processe, who-so list beholde,
 Off alle estatis, off hih and louh degre, 128
 And off pryncis bothe yong and olde,
 Fro the begynnyng, which in this world ha be,
 Lyuyng in ioie or in aduersite,
 Fro the frste he descendith down 132
 Off ther fortune be pleyn descripcioun.

beginning with
Adam and
ending with
King John
of France.

Off the most noble he ne spareth noon,
 But settith hem in ordre ceriously,
 Gynnyth at Adam & endith at kyng Iohn, 136

114. biddith] bitt B, but R, bydde H 5. 120. writith] writ H.
 126. heer in this world lyvyng] in this world her lyvyng H.
 129. yong] of yong H.

Ther auentures rehersyng by and by,
Off this kyng Iohn concludyng fynaly,
How that he was, for al his gret puissance,
Off prynce Edward take prisoner in France.

140

This seid[e] Bochas, auctour off this book,
Which off stories hadde gret intelligence,
Summe he leffte [and] somme also he took, —
Such as he leffte was off no necligence,
Supposyng and demyng off credence,
Alle the stories which that comoun be,
Other knew hem also weel as he.

What he left
out is of small
consequence,

144

And lest that folk wolde haue had disdeyn,
Thynge comoun to put in memorie,*
Therefore Bochas thouhte it was but veyn,
To his name noon encres off glorie,
To remembre no cronycle nor historie,
But tho that wern for ther merit notable,
Auctorised, famous and comendable.

148

for he included
all the best
and most
famous
histories,

152

In his labour hauyng a delit,
That the mater gretli myhte auaile,
Do plesance to the comon profit,
Off noble stories to make rehersaile,
Shewyng a merour how al the world shal faile,
And how Fortune, for al ther hih renoun,
Hath vpon pryncis iurediccioun.

156

shewing as in
a mirror how
Fortune is
supreme

160

The which[e] thyng, in ful sobre wise,
He considred in his inward entent,
In his resoun gan to aduertise,
Seyng off princis the blynd entendement,
With worldli worshep how that thei be blent,
As thei sholde euer ther estatis keepe,
And as Fortune were I-leid to sleepe.

over Princes,
who

164

As thei hadde off Fortune the maistry,
Here enchauntid with ther pocious
Bi sum craft off newe sorcery,
Or bi power off incantaciouns,
To make stable ther domynaciouns
With iren cheynys for to laste longe,
Lokkid to rokkis off adamantis stronge.

168

[p. 3]

believe, in
their pride,
that they are
her masters.

172

137. rehersyng] rehersith H. 148. folk] folkes R 3.

149. etc. memoire, gloire, histoire B.

163. considred] considriith H.

But Fortune
often casts
them down.

Supposyng[e] in ther surquedie 176
Ther estatis sholde be durable;
But Fortune kan frowardli denye,
Pleyntli preue that thei be chaungable,
And to pryncis, for thei be nat stable, 180
Fortune ful offte, for al ther gret estat,
Vnwarli chaungith & seith to hem chekmat.

Some Princes
even set God
at nought,

For lordis summe in ther magnificence 184
Off roial power sette off God riht nouht,
Thei nat considre his long pacience,
Nor aduertise his power in ther thouht,
But in ther hertis, yiff it were weel souht,
How he is meek and pacient to a-bide, 188
Thei wolde off resoun ther pompe leyn a-side.

but He
punishes
them:

But for ther tarieng and ther negligence,
That thei to hym wil nat resorte a-geyn,
Yit off his mercy and benyuolence, 192
Withoute vengeance, rigour or disdeyn,
As a meek fadir, in alle his werkis pleyn,
Assaith his yerde off castigacioun,
So for to brynge hem to correccioun. 196

some with
sickness, others
with adversity.

Summe he can ful fadirli chastise,
Where he loueth, be punshyng off siknesse,
And off his mercy in many a-nother wise
Baduersite* off sum worldli distresse; 200
And he nat askith, for his kynd[e]nesse,
Off hih nor low, who-so can aduerte,
Noon othir tresor but a mannys herte.

Bochas
believed that
it is right to
hold before
the vicious
notable
examples of
those who fell;

And as myn auctour list to comprehende, — 204
This Iohn Bochas, bi gret auctorite, —
It is almesse to correct* and a-mende
The vicious folk off euery comounte,
And bi examplis which that notable be 208
Off pryncis olde, that whilom dede fall,
The lowere peeple from ther errour call.

Bi smale whelpis, as summe clerkis write,
Chastised is the myhti fers leoun, 212
And whan the suerd off vengauunce eek doth bite

184. rihtnouht B, R. 186. auertise R.
193. ponysshying H, punysshying R 3, punishying H 5.
200. Baduersite] Bathuersite B, Bi aduersite R.
201. his] om. R. 206. correct] correctyn B.

Vpon pryncis for ther transgressioun,
The comon peepke in ther opynyoun,
For verray drede[e] tremble don* & quake,
And bi such mene ther vices thei forsake.

for if Princes
are chastised,
so much the
more ought
the commons
to dread a
like fate.

And such also as ha be defoulid
In ther vicis bi long contynuaunce,
Or in ther synys rustid and Imowlid,
Bi good example may come to repentaunce:
Who hym repentith, the Lord will hym auauce,
And hym accepte, in hi and louh estat, —
The meek preserue, punyshe the obstynat.

Even hardened
sinners may be
brought to
repentance by
good example.

This said[e] mater, touchyng such[e] thyngis,
Myn-auctour Bochas heerafftir shal declare
Bexauple off pryncis & off myhti kyngis,
What was ther fyn, & nat the trouthe spare;
And thei my stile nakid be and bare,
In rethorik myn auctour for to sue,
Yit fro the trouthe shal I nat remue,

My style is
bare of
rhetoric,

But on the substance bi good leiser abide,
Afftir myn auctour lik as I may atteyne,
And for my part sette eloquence aside,
And in this book bewepen and compleyne
Thassaut off Fortune, froward and sodeyne,
How she on pryncis hath kid her variaunce
And off her malice the dedli mortal chaunce.

but I will
deal faithfully
with my
author.

But, o alas! who shal be my muse,
Or onto whom shal I for helpe calle?
Calliope my callyng will refuse,
And on Pernaso here worthi sustren alle;
Thei will ther sugre tempere with no galle,
For ther suetnesse & lusti fressh syngyng
Ful ferr discordith fro materis compleynyng.

I have no
Muse; my
subject is too
doleful for
the Sisters of
Mt. Parnassus,

My maistir Chaucer, with his fresh comedies,
Is ded, alas, cheeff poete off Breteyne,
That whilom made ful pitous tragedies;
The fall of pryncis he dede also compleyne,
As he that was of makyng souereyne,
Whom al this land sholde off riht preferre,
Sithe off oure language he was the lodesterre.

and Chaucer,
alas, is dead,
the lodestar
of our
language.

216. don] down B, R, a down J. 217. mene] menys H.
229. nakid] naked H.
251. sholde off riht] of right ou3t J.

Other men,
too, wrote
tragedies:
Seneca, Tully,
and Francis
Petrarch, who

Senek in Rome, thoruh his hih prudence,
Wrot tragedies of gret moralite;
And Tullius, cheeff welle off eloquence,
Maad in his tyme many fressh dite;
Franceis Petrak, off Florence the cite,
Made a book, as I can reherce,
Off too Fortunys, welful and peruerse.

[p. 4]

256

made a book
of Two
Fortunes.

And ageyn bothe wrot the remedies,
In bookis tweyne made a divisioun,
A-mong rehersyng many fressh stories.
The firste book is thus conueied doun,
A dialoge twen Gladnesse and Resoun;
The seconde can ber me weel witesse,
Maad atwen Resoun & Worldli Heuynesse.

260

264

John Bochas
told how
Princes fell
into distress.

The mater is wondirful delectable,
Thouh wo with ioie haue an interesse;
And Iohn Bochas wrot maters lamentable,
The fall of pryncis, where he doth expresse
How fro ther ioie thei fill in gret distresse;
And all these writers, thoruh ther famous renoun,
Gret worshipec dede vnto ther nacioun.

268

272

All praise to
my master
Chaucer, who
refined our
language.

And semblabli as I ha[ue] told toforn,
My maistir Chaucer dede his besynesse,
And in his daies hath so weel hym born,
Out off our tunge tauoiden al reudnesse,
And to refourme it with colours of suetnesse;
Wherfore lat us yiue hym laude & glory
And putte his name with poetis in memory.

276

280

He wrote
Troilus,

Off whos labour to make mencion,
Wherthoruh off riht he sholde comendid be,
In youthe he made a translacioun
Off a book which callid is Trophe
In Lumbard tunge, as men may reede & see,
And in our vulgar, longe or that * he deide,
Gaff it the name off Troilus & Cresseide.

284

and
translated
Boece.

Which for to reede louers hem delite,
Thei ha[ue] theryn so gret deuocioun.
And this poete, hymself also to quite,

288

263. thus] thus first H. 267. wondirful] riht wondir H.
268. an interesse] intresse R.
284. callid is] is callid R. 286. that] than B, R.

Off Boeces book, The Consolacioun,
Maad in his tyme an hool translacioun.
And to his sone, that callid was Lowis,
He made a tretis, ful noble & off gret pris,

292 He made a
treatise on
the Astrolabe
for his son
Lewis,

Vpon thastlabre in ful notable fourme,
Sette hem in ordre with ther dyuysiouns,
Mennys wittis tapplien and confourme,
To vndirstonde be ful expert resouns
Be domefieng off sundry mansiouns,
The roote out-souht at the ascendent,
Tofor or he gaff any iugement.

296

He wrot also ful many day agone,
Dante in Inglissh, hymself so doth expresse,
The pitous story off Ceix and Alcione,
And the deth eek of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And notabli dede his bisynesse,
Bi gret auys his wittis to dispose,
To translate the Romaunce off the Rose.

300

304 translated
from Dante
and wrote
Ceix and
Alcyone,
The Deth of
Blaunche,
The Romaunt
of the Rose,

Thus in vertu he sette al his entent,
Idilnesse and vicis for to fle;
Off Foulis also he wrot the Parlement,
Theryn remembryng of roial Eglis thre,
How in ther chois thei felte aduersite,
Tofor Nature profred the bataile,
Ech for his parti, yiff it wolde auaile.

308

The Parlement
of Foules,

He dede also his dilligence & peyne
In our vulgar to translate and endite
Origen vpon the Maudeleyne,
And off the Leoun a book he dede write;
Off Anneleyda* and of fals Arcite
He made a compleynt, doolful & pitous,
And off the broche which that Vulcanus

316

Origen on
Mary
Magdalen,
The Book of
the Lion,
Anelida and
Fals Arcyte,
the story of
the brooch
that Vulcan
wrought,

At Thebes wrouhte, ful dyuers of nature,
Ouide writith, who theroff hadde a siht,
For hih desir he shulde nat endure
But he it hadde, neuer be glad nor liht;
And yiff he hadde it onys in his myht,

320

324

292. an] & R. 294. The last two letters of pris torn off H.

303. Dante] Dant H. 305. eek] also H.

312. remembryng] memebryng R. 318. mawgdeleyne H.

320. Anneleyda] Anneloyda B, H 5, Anneleida R, H, P,
anelida J. 328. writ] wrott R.

- Lich as my maistir seith and writ in deede,
It to conserue he sholde ay lyue in dreede. 328
- The Legende
of Good
Women,
This poete wrot, at request off the queen,
A legende off parfit hoolynesse,
Off Goode Women to fynde out nynteen 332
That dede excelle in bounte and fairnesse;
But* for his labour and [his] bisynesse
Was inportable his wittis to encoumbre,
In al this world to fynde so gret a noumbre. 336
- The
Canterbury
Tales,
He made the book off Cantirburi Talis, [p. 5]
Whan the pilgrymis rood on pilgrymage
Thoruhout Kent bi hillis and bi valis,
And alle the stories told in ther passage, 340
Enditid hem ful weel in our language:
Summe off knyghthod, summe off gentilesse,
And summe off loue & summe off parfitnesse,
- including
the stories of
Melibeus in
prose,
Griselda,
and The
Monk's Tale,
And summe also off gret moralite, 344
Summe off disport, includynge gret sentence.
In prose he wrot the Tale off Melibe,
And off his wiff, that callid was Prudence,
And off Grisildis* parfit pacience, 348
And how the Monk off stories newe & olde
Pitous tragedies be the weie tolde.
- and many
complaints,
roundels,
ballades
and songs.
This said poete, my maistir in his daies,
Maad and compiled ful many a fressh dite, 352
Compleyntis, baladis, roundelis, virelaies
Ful delectable to heryn and to see,
For which men sholde, off riht and equite,
Sithe he off Inglissh in makynge was the beste, 356
Preie onto God to yiue his soule good reste.
- Poets used
to be the
favourites
of kings.
And these poetis I make off mencion,
Were bi old tyme had in gret deynte,
With kyngis, pryncis in euery regioun, 360
Gretli preferrid afftir ther degre;
For lordis hadde plesance for to see,
To studie a-mong, and to caste ther lookis
At good[e] leiser vpon wise bookis. 364

334. But] And B. 342. 2nd summe] & summe R.
345. encludyng R. 348. Gresildes B.
352. a] om. H. 357. good] om. R.

For in the tyme off Cesar Iulius,
 Whan the tryumphe he wan in Rome toun,
 He entre wolde the scoole off Tullius
 And heere his lecture off gret affeccoun;
 And natwithstandyng his conquest & renoun,
 Vnto bookis he gaff gret attendaunce
 And hadde in stories ioie and gret pleasunce.

Cesar
 himself
 listened to
 Tully's
 teaching.
 368

Eek in this land, I dar afferme a thyng:
 There is a prynce ful myhti off puisaunce,
 A kyngis sone and vnle to the kyng
 Henry the Sexte, which is now in Fraunce,
 And is lieftenant, and hath the gouernaunce
 Off our Breteyne, thoruh whos discrecioun
 He hath conserued in this regioun,

372 In this
 country
 there is a
 Prince, a
 good knight,

Duryng his tyme, off ful hih prudence,
 Pes and quiete and sustened riht,
 Yit natwithstandyng his noble prouidence,
 He is in deede proued a good[e] knyht,
 Eied as Argus with resoun and forsiht;
 Off hih lettrure, I dar eek off hym telle,
 And treuli deeme that he doth excelle

380 who excels
 all in
 understanding

In vndirstondyng alle othir off his age,
 And hath gret ioie with clerkis to comune:
 And no man is mor expert off language,
 Stable in study alwey he doth contune,
 Settyng a-side alle chaungis of Fortune;
 And wher he loueth, yiff I shal nat tarie,
 Withoute cause ful loth he is to varie.

388 and loves to
 be with
 scholars and
 read their
 books.

Duc off Gloucestre men this prynce calle,
 And natwithstandyng his staat & dignite,
 His corage neuer doth appalle
 To studie in bookis off antiquite,
 Therin he hath so gret felicite
 Vertuously hymself to ocupie,
 Off vicious slouthe to haue the maistrie.

392 He is the
 Duke of
 Gloucester,

And with his prudence and with his manheed,
 Trouthe to susteene he fauour set a-side,
 And hooli chirch[e] meyntenynge in deed,

396
 400 a man who
 upholds the
 church and
 tolerates no
 Lollard,

369. renoun] gret Renoun H. 374. to] vn to H.
 375. Henry] Herry H, Henri J. 376. lefftenaunt H.
 382. goode] riht good H.
 384. lettrure] lectrure B, R, lettur R 3, lecture P.
 400. 2nd with] wit R.

That in this land no Lollard dar abide —
 As verray support, vpholdere and eek guide 404
 Sparith noon, but maketh hymsiluen strong
 To punysse all tho that do the chirch[e] wrong.

manly and
 wise, he is a
 foe to all
 heretics.

Thus is he bothe manli and eek wis,
 Chose off God to been his owyn knyht, 408
 And off o thyng he hath a synguler pris,
 That heretik dar noon come* in his siht,
 In Cristis feith he stant so hool vpriht,
 Off hooli chirche diffence and champioun, 412
 To chastise alle that do therto tresoun.

And to do plesaunce to our lord Iesu,
 He studieth euer to haue intelligence;
 Reedyng off bookis bryngith in vertu, 416
 Vices excludyng, slouthe and negligence,
 Makith a prynce to haue experience,
 To knowe hymsilff, in many sundri wise,
 Wher he trespassith his errour to chastise. 420

He knew the
 book of
 Bochas,

And a-mong bookis, pleykli this the cas, [p. 6]
 This said[e] prynce considred off resoun,
 The noble book off this Iohn Bochas
 Was, accordyng in his opynyoun, 424
 Off gret noblesse and reputacioun,
 And onto pryncis gretli necessarie
 To yiue exauple how this world doth varie.

and bade me
 translate it
 into English,

And for this cause, as in his entent, 428
 To shewe thuntrust off al worldli thyng,
 He gaff to me in comaundement,
 As hym sempte it was riht weel sitting,
 That I shulde, aftir my cunnyng, 432
 This book translate, hym to do plesaunce,
 To shewe the chaung off worldli variaunce.

which I will
 do, although
 I lack
 eloquence.

And with support off his magnificence,
 Vndir the wyngis off his correccioun, 436
 Thouh that I haue lak off eloquence,
 I shal procede in this translacioun,
 Fro me auoidyng al presumpcioun,
 Lowli submyttyng eueri hour & space 440
 Mi reud language to my lordis grace.

409. o] oon H. 410. come] comen B, R.
 415. studieth] studieht R. 421. this] this is R, J.
 428. this cause] pise causes J, these causes P.

And as I haue o thyng weel in mynde,
 He bad me I sholde in especial,
 Folwyng myn auctour, writen as I fynde,
 And for no fauour be nat parciall —
 Thus I meene to speke in generall,
 And noon estat syngulerly depraue,
 But the sentence off myn auctour saue.

I will follow
 my author
 and shew
 no bias,

444

Al this conceyuyd, I gan my stile dresse,
 Thouhte I wolde in my mater proceede;
 And for the mater abraid on heuynesse,
 Off fressh colours I took no maner heede,
 But my processe pleyntly for to leede,
 As me sempte it was to me most meete
 To sette apart all rethoriques sueete.

and, as my
 matter is
 serious, I
 shall omit all
 flourishes.

448

452

Dites of murnyng and off compleynynge
 Nat appertene onto Calliope,
 Nor to the Muses, that on Parnaso synge,
 Which be remembrid in noumbre thries thre;
 And onto materes off aduersite,
 With ther sugred aureat licour
 Thei be nat willi for to doon fauour;

456 Calliope and
 her Sisters
 cannot help
 me write of
 aduersity,

460

But off disdeyn me setting ferr a-bak
 To hyndre me* off that I wolde endite,
 Hauyng no colours but onli whit & blak,
 To the tragedies which that I shal write.
 And for I can my-silff no bet acquite,
 Vndir support off all that shal it reede,
 Vpon Bochas riht thus I will proceede.

so I will do
 my best in
 simple black
 and white.

464

468

Explicit prologus.

Incipit Liber Primus.

[How adam and Eue for their inobedience were
 put out of paradys • lyued in sorowe and
 woo/thei and their of spryng.]¹

W^han Iohn Bochas considred hadde & souht [p.8]
 The woful fall off myhti conquerours,
 A remembraunce entrid in his thouht,
 Reknyng the noumbre off our predecessours,
 And first to mynde cam the progenitours

Adam and
 Eve first
 appear before
 Bochas,

472

463. ferr] fast H. 464. me] men B, R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 3 b.

trembling with
weakness and
old age.

Off al mankynde, ferre Ironne in age,
And toward hym holdyng the passage, 476
As hym thouhte in his inward siht,
In ther comyng ful pitousli tremblyng,
Quakyng for age and for lak off myht,
Ther gret feeblesse be signes out shewyng; 480
And oon off hem, first at his comyng —
Our fadir Adam — sodenli abraide,
And to myn auctour euene thus he saide:

[How Adam & Eve stondyng/naked before Bochas
desired him to put theire woful fall first in
remembraunce.]¹

Adam said,
"It is right
that you
should begin
with us.

"Cosyn Bochas, I will weel that thou lere, 484
Thou that art besi to serche ouer all
Off infortune the maner to enquere,
Hir sodeyn chaung, turnyng as a ball,
Off erthli pryncis from ther estat roiall — 488
It is most sittyng, or we assundir twynne,
At vs tweyne thi processe to be-gynne.

"The Serpent
caused our
exile from
Paradise."

Considre first, the Lord in his auis,
Whan he us made onto his liknesse, 492
He putte vs bothe into Paradis,
There talyued in parfit stabilnesse —
Til the Serpent dede his besynesse
Off fals envie to make us lese our grace, 496
Perpetueli texile us fro that place."

Fairest of
all creatures
were they;

And whan Iohn Bochas nakid hem beheeld,
Withoute the hand fourmyd off Nature, —
Off slym off therthe in Damascene the feeld 500
God made hem fairest a-boue ech creature;
And for thei sholde perpetueli endure,
Bi discrecioun for a prerogatif
He endued hem with a soule off liff. 504

God gave
them the
Garden of
Eden,

Parfit off age as man off thretti yeer,
Putte hem afftir in possessioun
Off Paradis, a place most enter,

485] That art so besi to serche oueral J — serche] serch out
H, P, R 3.

486. maner] mateer H — Inquere H. 504. He] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 3 c. in margin.

And off delis a chose mansioun,
Where Adam made an imposicioun
To fissh and foul, and to thes beestis all,
Off verray resoun what men sholde hem call.

508

Out off a rib, whil that Adam sleep,
Eue was drawe, ful fair off hir visage,
Al sodenly or that* he took keep,
Afftir to hym ioynynd in mariage
For his disport and his auantage,
So as the Lord first wyues dede ordeyne
Outher for helpe or for encre off peyne.

512

and for
Adam's
advantage
Eve was
created, and
became
his wife.

516

God onto hem gaff the souereynte
Off Paradis and dominacioun,
A place fulfellig off al felicitye,
The frutis all in ther subieccioun,
Sauf that off oon was maad excepcioun,
Which God forbad, the Bible can deuise,
That thei sholde touche it in no wise.

520

All frutes in
that beautiful
garden
were theirs
save one,

524

All delices off that heuenli place
God gaff to hem and put in her keypyng,
To vsen hem eueri hour and space
To ther most ese, as was to hem likyng —
Bloomys, blomys, ther fairnesse ay hauyng,
And the frutis alway off o fressshnesse,
For wyntir stormys myht do hem no duresse.

528

and all the
delights of
that heavenly
place were
given into
their keeping.

532

The soil enbroudid ful off somer floures,
Wher weedis wikke hadde noon interesse;
For God and Kynde with fressshnesse off coloures
And with ther tapitis & motles off gladnesse
Had maad that place habounde in al suetnesse;
And fressh[e] Flora, which is off floures queene,
Hir lyuere made off a perpetuel greene.

536

The soil was
embroidered
with flowers,

The trees rauhten almost to the heuene,
Which cast a-boute a ful plesant shade,
That storm nor reyn, thundir, wynd nor leuene
No power hadde ther leuys for to fade:

540

and the trees
grew up
almost to
the sky.

508. delis] delites H, delitis J, delittes R 3, delites H 5, P.

509. an] om. R. 514. that] than B, H.

516. and] and for H.

521. fulfellig H, fulfild J.

526. delices] delites H, H 5, delittes R 3, delis J, delices P.

538. which] whilk H. 541. abouten R, H.

For euer thei wern Ilich[e] fressh and glade; 544
 And whan thei list, ther thei myhte see
 Mid off that gardyn off liff the holsum tre,

But they
 foolishly ate
 the fruit of
 the Tree of
 Life.

Which vertu hadde ageyn al maladie 548
 Folk to preserue off youthe in ther fresshnesse,
 Who eet theroff sholde neuer deie,
 But lyuen euere in ioie and in gladnesse,
 And nouthur feele trouble nor siknesse,
 But in that place haue alwey hertis ese 552
 And suffisaunce off al that myht hym plese,

against God's
 command-
 ment,

Euer endure and neuer falle in age, [p. 9]
 For which it was callid the tre off liff.
 But whan Adam was fallyn in dotage 556
 And ageyn[es] God gan holdyn striff,
 Thoruh excityng off hir that was his wiff,
 And wilfulli gaff to hir assent
 To breke the precept & comandement 560

Off God the Lord, thoruh wilful necligence,
 Taproche the tre, which that bar the name,
 The tre off cunnyng and also off science:
 For off the frut who that dede attame, 564
 He sothli sholde, the Bible seith the same,
 Off good & euell haue cunnyng in his thouht,
 Where-as tofforn off euyl he knew riht nouht.

and brought
 evil into the
 world.

Thus hadde thei first off euyl experience, 568
 Where-as toforn thei knew no wikkidnesse;
 Presumpcioun and inobedience
 Brouht hem fro ioie into wrechidnesse:
 For afor-tyme, myn auctour berth witenesse, 572
 Helthe and goodnesse wer callid verray liff,
 Euyl namyd siknesse, first roote of al our striff.

There were
 three rivers
 in Paradise,

In Paradis, myn auctour seith certeyn,
 Thre ryuers wern, so orient and fyne, 576
 Lich quyksiluyr vpboilyng on the pleyn,
 And in ther rennyng verray cristallyne,
 Which from a welle heuenli and deuyne

550. 2nd in] *om.* H. 553. hym] hem R.
 557. ageynes God gan holdyn] ageyn God began to holden J,
 ayenst God gan to holden P.
 558. excityng] encityng R. 559. gaff] he yaue P.
 562. bar] bere R. 574. Euyl] Ill R 3 — namyd] namy R.

In ther vpspryngyng and ther aualyng down 580
Off al plesance gaff so soote a soun,*

That it wolde rauysshe a corage, —
Whos bawmy licour endued al the place,
And with the fressshnesse & cours off his passage 584
The holsum hair hertis dede embrace, —
Ther was such plente off plesance & off grace,
That eueri spice, herbe, greyn and roote
Wer founde growyng in that gardeyn soote. 588

wholesome
air, all manner
of herbs and
spices, and
the sound
of birds
singing.

Ther was also a delectable soun
Off song off birdis in ther armonye,
The hair was cleene from al corrupcioun,
For ther engendrid was no maladie; 592
Ther was al merthe, ther was al melodie,
Off ioie and blisse souereyn suffisance,
With al that may to hertis do plesance.

And off clerkis lik as it is told 596
In ther bookis, as thei determyne,
How in his speer the sonne manyfold
Was off mor vertu & mor cleer dede shyne
Than it doth now in his mydday lyne, 600
The moone whittere with^hir* bemys cleer,
And euery sterre brihtere dede appeer.

The sun shone
brighter then
than it does
now,

Euery thyng was therē more vertuous
Than thei be now, who can beholde and see; 604
For in that place ther was nothyng noious,
But parfit gladnesse knet onto surete,
Perpetuel pes, ioie and prosperite,
And in that blisse to makyn hem mor strong, 608
To ther confort God spak with hem a-mong.

and there was
perpetual
peace and joy.

Off his goodnesse he bar hem cumpanye,
Shewed onto hem his gracious presence,
Angelis also ther staat to magnifie 612
A-mong to serue hem dede ther dilligence
In dyuers offices with humble reuerence,
And Nature wrouhte for the nonys
Off roial purpill and off riche stonys 616
Tissues off gold and othir ornamentis
For tenvirowne ther bodili beute,

God often
appeared to
Adam and
Eve, and
angels served
them.

581. so soote a soun] a soote soun B, R. 585. embrace H.

601. hir] his B, R, R 3. 603. vertous R.

617. ornamentis] precious stonys R (in another band).

- Shapyng to hem such maner garnementis
 As angelis vsen in ther felicite — 620
 Nakid thei wer[e]n fairest on to see;
 For whil thei stood in staat off innocence,
 Thei hadde off clothyng noon experience.
- They could
 have lived
 there always
 in celestial
 joy,
 And off ther blisse to make mencion, 624
 And off ther ioies that were celestiall,
 Ther may be maad[e] no comparisoun
 Off no ioie which is temporall,
 Which sholde ha been lastyng & inmortal, 628
 Euer talyued in merthe and in gladnesse,
 Sauff ageyn resoun, off verray wilfulnesse
- had not Adam
 given credence
 to a Snake.
 Thei banshid hemsilff out of that blisful liff,
 Whan Adam gaff credence to a snake 632
 And wrechidli gan trustyn on his wiff,
 Which gan thappill off the Serpent take,
 And plesantli dede a present make
 Onto Adam, as she that ferst began 636
 Deth to deuysel and poisoun onto man.
- Their fall
 was the more
 bitter,
 But as ther ioie was incomparable, [p. 10]
 Grettest ther lordship aboue al ertheli thyng,
 So ther fall was to he[m] importable; 640
 For he that was all other surmountyng,
 In Paradis regnyng as a kyng,—
 Was it nat a dedli mortal peyne
 Fro thilke place to haue* a fall sodeyne! 644
- for it followed
 felicity.
 For thilke sorwe surmountith euery sorwe,
 Which next folwith afftir felicite;
 No wo mor greuous at eue nor at morwe,
 As is in deede sodeyn aduersite 648
 Which cometh onwarli afftir prosperite,
 Nor nothyng more may hertis disauaunce
 Than off old ioie newe remembraunce.
- Take example
 of Adam
 and Eve,
 Takith exaumpil off Adam and off Eue, 652
 Makith off hem a merour in your mynde,
 Wher of resoun it dede hem gretli greue
 For to be put, allas, so ferre behynde

619. maner] *om.* R.621. weren] *weren* H 5, P, were J, R 3.628. immortall R. 629. 2nd in] *om.* H, J, H 5.

631. banshid] banyssht H, banysshid J. 633. on] to R.

644. thilke] that H 5 — to haue] taue B.

Out off that blisse, thei and al ther kynde,
 Chaungyng thestat off immortalite
 And becam subiect to deth and pouerte.

656 who became
 subject to
 poverty and
 death.

Ther sodeyn chaung & ther onwar myscheeff
 And ther onhappi transmutacioun, —
 It was to hem ful vnkouth and vnleeff
 For to departe fro thilke mansioun
 That was so full off delectacioun,
 Fro such delicis sodenli to goo
 Into this world which is so full off woo.

660 It was hard
 for them to
 leave the
 Garden of
 Eden and its
 delights.

There is delit, and heer is sorwe [&] care,
 There is ioie, and heer is heuynesse,
 There is plente, and heer is euel fare,
 There is helthe, and heer is gret siknesse,
 Heer trouble ay meynt with onseur gladnesse,
 Ther is ay blisse and eternal glorie,*
 And heere no merthe but fals & transitorie.

664

668

672

Allas, how thei wer blyndid in ther siht
 Thoruh veynglorie* and fals ambicioun!
 Thei wente wrong, thei lokid nat a-riht,
 Fals couetise was ther confusioun,
 Werthoruh thei loste the dominacioun
 Off Paradis, and wex bothe poore & thrall,
 Ther fredam leffte and becam mortall.

They were
 blinded by
 vainglory

676

Onto God thei wolde ha be semblable,
 Lik onto hym good and euel to* knowe,
 And in ther trust for thei wer nat stable,
 From ther estat thei were brouht ful lowe:
 And thus, alas, the seed was first isowe,
 The roote plantid off disobeissaunce,
 Which brouht our lynage to sorwe & myschaunce.

680 and brought
 low.

684

Thus cam in first thoruh inobedience,
 As bi a gate, pouerte and neede;
 And at ther bak folwed indigence,
 Sorwe, siknesse, maladie and dreede,
 Exil, banshyng and seruitute, in deede,
 Which causid man longe to contune
 Vndir the lordshipe & daunger off Fortune.

688 Thus, through
 disobedience,
 all evils came
 into the world,
 sorrow,
 sickness,
 fear, pestilence,
 death,

692

657. immortalite R. 664. delites H, R 3.
 668. euefare B. 669. gret] om. H. 670. Heer] Heere is R.
 671. 2. gloire, transitoire B, transitoyre H. 674. veyngloire B.
 681. to] ta B. 683. brouht] I brouht H.

- Thus cam in eek maladie and deth
 To dispoile mankynde off his beute,
 Long siknesse and pestilence that sleth 696
 Bi sodeyn strok which no man may fle; *
 For onto Adam and his posterite
 Deth was annexid bi successioun
 For his offence, and so conueied down 700
 Fro man to man in eueri maner age.
 For who list knowe, synne brouht in shame,
 Man to be feeble and feynt in his passage,
 And be processe to wexen halt and lame — 704
 Onto Adam this was an vnkouth game,
 To be constreynyd from riche apparaile
 In bareyn erthe to sekyn his vitaile.
 In hungir [and] thrust heere he ladde his liff,
 With soot, with labour and tribulaciouns,
 Endured also many mortal striff,
 Off hot and cold riht straunge passiouns,
 Off elementis sodeyn mutaciouns, 712
 Wynd, hail and reyn feerfulli fallyng,
 And onwar strokis off thundir & lihtnyng.
 Thei stood also in daunger and in dreed
 Off cruel beestis, tigres and leouns, 716
 Off tusshi booris, who-so taketh heed,
 And in gret feer off these fell dragouns,
 Thassaut off serpentis and off scoriouns;
 For thilke beestis that toform were mylde, 720
 Afftir ther synnyng ful rage wex and wilde.
 Wher thei stood[e] first in sekirnesse, [p. 11]
 Off ioie and blisse euer in oon lastyng,
 Out off ther reste thei fill in onseurnesse, 724
 In sorwe and sihhyng, & dolorous pleynyng;
 And fro ther eyen contynueli wepyng,
 The bittir teris day be day distille,
 In this desert for wantyng off ther wille. 728
 And whethir wer thei sorweful or* fayn,
 Long tyme afftir ther desolacioun,
 Whan thei fond Abel ther owyn sone slayn

and the
 infirmities
 of old age.

Adam had
 to toil for
 his living

in the dread
 of cruel beasts,
 dragons and
 scorpions.

He and Eve
 shed bitter
 tears.

Afterwards
 Cain slew
 Abel,

697. which] which that H 5 — fle] see B, R.
 699. annexid] annexed R. 708. and] om. H.
 709. soot] soot R, swete H, swett R 3, swet P — 2nd with]
 and J, H 5. 713. feerfulli] feerdfulli J.
 725. dolorous] dolours R. 729. or] outhier B.

Be cruel Caym to his confusioun,
 The same Caym, as maad is mencioun,
 Afftir that tyme wilde and vacabounde
 Til blynde Lamech gaff hym his dethis wounde.

732

Adam nor Eue affor that ilke tyme
 Hadde neuer seyn no feste funerall,
 Off chaung it was* to hem a newe pryme,
 For to beholde a thyng disnaturall,
 Brethre off o wombe be hatred fraternall,
 The toon off herte* so feer hymself deuyde,
 Off fals malis to been an homicide.

736 which gave
occasion for
the first
funeral.

740

And was it nat a peyne whan thei stood,
 For to beholde ther sone pale and ded
 Ligge on the ground[e], bathid in his blood,
 And al the soil where he lay was red,
 That whan Adam and Eue tooken heed,
 It was to hem ful gret aduersite
 The newe slauhtre to beholde and see.

744

748

And euer a-mong ther sihhes harde and sore,
 Ther bittir wepyng and sorwes to auauunce,
 Or thei wer war, ther heris wexyn hore,
 And age gan ther beute disauauunce;
 Ther youthe also be ful gret displesaunce
 Gan tappalle, or thei it coude espie,
 Be cruel constreynt and force of maladie.

Their beauty
faded,

752

756

And whan off youthe fallyn was the flour
 Bi the processe of many hundrid yeris,
 And bi the duresse off many gret labour
 Thei wex onlusti and ougli off ther cheris —
 Off age and deth, these be the daungeris,
 To seyn chekmat, in nature it is kouth,
 Onto beute and greene lusty youth.

they became
dull and
uncomely
with years.

760

For whan the yeris fulli pæssid be
 Off flouryng age, lastyng a sesoun,
 Be processe, at eie men may see,
 Beute declynyth, his blomys falle doun;
 And lite and litil be successioun

764

768

732. Caym R, H, J, R 3, Cayme H 5, Cayn P.

735. Lameth, *as written in* B, R, H.738. Off chaung it was] It was off chaung B — it was to hem]
to hem it was R 3.

741. herte] hate B, R.

752. thei] the R. 759. labour] labours R.

Cometh croked elde onwarli in crepyng,
With his potent ful poorli manasyng.

Thus Adam,
once the
fairest of
men, grew
old and died.

Thus to our fadir, that callid was Adam,
Off creatures fairest off alle faire, 772
Afftir gret age, bi processe deth in cam,
And gan onwarli ascende vpon the staire
With his potent, and caste hym to repaire
With Antropos, which affor shal goon 776
For tuntwyne his lyuys threed anoon.

He was
buried in
Hebron.

And in Ebron was maad his sepulture,
Ther afftir bilt a myhti gret cite,
Bi whos story and record off nature 780

His dis-
obedience
made all
men subject
to death.

I may conclude, who-so list to see,
That neuer man hadde liberte,
Sithen that Adam our Lord gan disobeye,
Ageyn[e]s deth, but that he muste deye. 784

The compleynt off Bochas vpon the fall off Adam.

Bochas
laments the
fate of Adam,

IN compleynyng, myn^auctour Iohn Bochas
Ful pitousli in his aduertence
Bewepith, wailith, & offte seith allas,
In an appel ther was so gret offence, 788
That for a tast off inobedienc^e,
Adam, allas, sholde ha[ue] so gret a fall,
So sodenli to deie and be mortall!

whose
example
teaches us
the sorrow
of the world.

Which exaumpil ouhte I-nouh suffise, 792
In al this world[e] thouh there were no mo,
Texemplefie to folkis that be wise,
How this world is a thoruhfare ful off woo,
Lich fals Fortune, which turnyth to and fro 796
To make folkis, whan thei most cleerli shyne,
In ther estatis onwarli to declayne.

For all their
pride, men
must die.

For thouh that thei her hedis leffte a-loffte [p. 12]
Hih as Phebus shynyth in his speer, 800
Thynke them-silff[e], as it fallith offte,
Ther renoun rechith aboue the sterris cleer,
And how ther fame surmountith euery speer —

775. and] *om.* H.

797. cleerli] clery R. 799. liift H. 800. Hih] lich R.

801. Thynke] tenke R.

- Ther trust corrupt hath a ful sodeyn fall, 804
 For to declare how thei be mortall.
 O worldli folk, aduertisith off entent,
 What vengauce and what punycioun 808
 God shal taken in his iugement
 For your trespas and your transgressioun,
 Which breke his preceptis a-geyn al resoun!
 Ye han forgotten, how with his precious blood
 You for to saue he starff vpon the rood. 812
 For yiff Adam for his disobeissaunce
 Was bi the Lord, as hym list ordeyne,
 Maad first & formyd with euery circumstaunce
 Off creatures to be most souereyne, 816
 Yiff that he was enbraced in the cheyne
 Off seruitute, with thraldam ouerseyn,
 What shal I thanne off othir folkis seyn,
 That lyuyn heer in this desert off sorwe, 820
 In this exil off plesance desolat,
 And in this world[e], both at eue &* morwe,
 Off hertili ioie stonde disconsolat,
 Al destitut and eek infortuniat, 824
 And forpossid with wo off worldli trouble,
 Ay variable and ful off chaungis double?
 Ye nat entende but to fals couetise,
 To fraude, baret and extorsioun, 828
 Geyn God and trouthe in many dyuers wise,
 Geyn your neihbour be fals collusioun
 To doon [him] wrong and oppressioun,
 And werst off all, ye rechch[e] nat be synne 832
 To sle your soule, worldli good to wyne.
 And yiff it falle your power be but small
 Taccomplisse your auarice in deede,
 Your synful will assentith ouerall 836
 Thyng to desire off which ye* may nat speede;
 And thus fals lust doth your bridil leede,
 Thrust off hauyng so sore you doth assaile,
 Falsli afferd the world you sholde faile. 840

O worldly
people, know
that God will
punish you

as he did
Adam, know
sovereign
of men!

You draw
only to
covetousness
and fraud,
you oppress
your fellow
men and
slay your
own souls
for gain. If
too weak to
sin in deed,
you sin in
thought.

822. &] & at B, R, H, J, R 3.

826. ful] om. R.

831. him] om. R, H. 832. ye] the R. 834. falle] hap R3.

837. ye] thei B, om. R. 839. Thurst R, H.

840. Falsli] Fals R.

If God
chastises you
lightly, you
complain.

And yiff that God, benigne and debonaire,
With his yerde off castigacioun
Chastise you but esili and faire,
Ye grucch ageyn[es] his correccioun,
Nothyng aduerting in your discrecioun,
How God nat bad us, who can taken heed,
Nat for to stryue nor to wrastle in deed,

844

God does not
bid us prove
our might
on the
Chimæra,

Nouthur our strengthe nor our myht tapplie
Vpon the beeste monstuous and sauage,
Which callid is the Chymere off Licie —
Speciali whan he is in his rage,
Which monstre hadde to his auauntage
Hed off a leoun, as bookis determyne,
Wombe off goot, and tail serpentyne,

848

852

or conquer
the Golden
Fleece, or
slay the
Minotaur or
do anything
that is
impossible.

Which was outraied off Bellofforon,
As olde poetis make mencioun.
Nor God bad nat that men sholde gon
Into Colchos to conquere with Iason-
The Flees off Gold, which in that regioun
With firi bolis off metal maad and bras,
And bi a dragoun ful streihtli kepid was.

856

860

God bad us nat our cuntrees for to lete
To vndirfonge thynges impossible,
The Minotaur for to slen in Crete,
Halff man, halff bole, yiff it be credible,
Which was a monstre hatful and odible,
Whilom brouht foorth, in bookis ye may see,
Bi Minos wiff, callid Pasiphe,

864

868

Whos story techith, yiff ye list to lere,
This ougli beeste cruel and monstuous,
Thoruh Adriane, the kyngis douhter deere,
Was whilom slay[e]n be duc Theseus
Withynne a caue maad be Dedalus.
God bit us nat, pleynli, for his sake,
So gret emprises for to vndirtake.

872

He does not
tell us to risk
our lives in
adventure as
did Hercules.

He bit us nat to been so rek[e]les
In pereilous deedis that been marciall
Vs to iuparte as dede Hercules,

876

847. to wrastle] for to wrastile R, for to wrastle H, for to
wrastill R 3.

850. callid] clepid H. 855. Bellofforon] belliferoun J.

862. bad] gaff R. 869. lere] heer H. 872. be] the R.

Which bi the biddying in especiall
 Off Euristeus, the myhti kyng roiall,
 Lord off Athenys, to make his honour shyne,
 Leryd off armys the famous disciplyne.

880

Off his preceptis yiff we han a siht
 And remembre off his hih bounte,
 He vs comaundith thyngis that been liht
 For taccomplisshe with al humilite,
 From our corage tauoide al vanite,
 And from our hertis texcludyn idilnesse
 And the fals chaung off al worldli gladnesse.

[p. 13] He asks us
 only to exclude
 884 vanity and
 idleness from
 our hearts.

888

For on-taman that parfit is and stable,
 Bi good resoun myn auctour doth well preue,
 There is no thyng mor fair nor agreable
 Than fynali his vicious liif to leue,
 On verray God rihtfully beleue,
 Hym loue and worshepe a-boue al ertheli thinges;
 This passith victory off emperours and kynges.

Nothing
 892 pleases a good
 man more
 than to do
 right and
 love God.

896

The Lord bit eek, who* that can discerne,
 Off enter loue to doon our labour
 In this liif heer so oursilff * gouerne,
 To fadir & moodir that we do dieu honour,
 And in ther neede to doon to hem socour,
 And in al vertu our freadis to conforte,
 And to our power in myscheeff hem supporte.

900

For in this world is no thyng mor parfit,
 Nor taccomplisshe thyng off mor plesance,
 Than a man for to haue delit
 In litil good to hauen suffisance,
 And be content in his gouernance,
 Voide auarice and thynkyn euer a-mong,
 To his neihbour that he do no wrong.

904 A man should
 be content
 with little
 wealth, do no
 wrong to his
 neighbour,

908

Nat to coueite his goodis in no wise,
 Hymself gouerne lik to his estat,
 Nat excede, but fleen and eek despise

912

880. Euristius R.

890. on-taman] vnto a man H, J, R 3, P, H 5.

895. ertheli] om. R.

897. bit] biddith R 3, H 5 — who] we B, R.

899. oursilff] our liif B, R. 902. conforte H.

907. hauen] haue H, R, R 3.

913. excede] to excede J, H 5 — an l precedes eke in H (slip
 of pen).

and live in
continence
and peace.

Al maner loue which is disordynat,
Hymstilff preseruynge from kontek & debat,
And speciali teshewen, it is good,
Slauhtre, moordre & shedyng eek off blood.

916

He should
avoid scorn
and follow the
example of
Our Lord,

Fleen from his synne and hatyn for to lie,
Off olde offencis a-mong ha[ue] repentance,
And teshewe al scorn and moquerie,
Ageyn vicis doon almesse and penance,
And to haue most souere[y]nli plesance
To sue the pathes* of our Lord Iesu,
Trewe examplaire off grace and al vertu.

920

924

who asked
nothing more
than that we
do as he
bade us.

Which for our sake and our redempcioun
And for our loue was nailid to a tre,
Suffrid peyne and cruel passioun,
And nothyng axeth, off hih nor low degre
Recompensid ageynward for to be,
But that we sette al hooli our ententis
For to fulfille his comaundementis.

928

And off his grace heer in this mortal liff,
As we precelle in wisdom and resoun,
And off his giffte han a prerogatif

932

Let us be
better than
beasts, and
remember
that all
worldly
wealth shall
fade as a
rose,

To for all beestis bi discrecioun,
Therefore lat us off hool entencioun,
As we off resoun beestis ferr excede,
Lat us forn* hem be, be woord, example and deede.

936

Grounde us first vpon humilite,
Our pompous eien meekli to vnclose,
Enclyne our hedis, and to conceyue and see
Al worldli welthe shal fadyn as a rose,
And off meek herte lat us oursilff dispose,
Bi this tragedie to ha[ue] knowlechyng
Off our myscheff how roote and eek gynnyng

940

944

and that
pride and
disobedience
were the
beginning
of sorrow.

Was the vice off inobediēce,
Surquedie and fals disobeissaunce,
As myn auctour hath shewid in sentence,
Enprentith it weel in your remembraunce,
Be-war* the serpent with his disseyaunce,

948

920. mokrye H. 923. pathes] paththes B, R, pathis H.

932. his] om. R. 933. in] of J — and] of J.

934. han] and R. 936. hool] hoolde R.

938. forn] afor MSS. — 1st be] om. J — 2nd be] in H 5 —
by example word & dede R 3.

944. to haue] ta H. 950. Be-war] Beth war B, J.

The flesh, the world, your ennies, alle thre,
Thoruh ther treynys ye nat deceyued be.

952

Your beste sheeld to make resistence
Ageyn ther power sothli is meeknesse,
Your haberioun most myhti off diffence,
The feendis myht to venquyssh and oppresse,
Is to remembre deuoutli with lownesse,
How meekli Crist to paien our ransoun
Suffred on a crosse deth and passioun.

956

Meekness is
your best
shield of
defence.

Wherbi men may, that prudent been & wis,
The ioies cleyme which been eternall,
And entre ageyn into Paradis,
Fro when[ne]s whilom Adam hadde a fall;
To which[e] place a-boue celestiall,
O Crist Iesu, so brynge us to that glory,
Which be thi deth hadde the victory!

960

May Iesus
bring us
again into
Paradise!

964

¶ The lenvoye off this tragedie.

SODEYN departyng out off felicitye
Into miserie and mortal-heuynesse,
Vnwar depriuynge of our prosperite,
Chaung off gladnesse into wrechchidnesse,
Long langwisshyng in wo and bittirnesse,
Contynuel sorwe, dreed, dool and pestilence
Were first brouht in bi inobedience.

[p. 14]

968

Disobedience
turned all
joy into woe.

Adam and Eue losten ther liberte,
Ther fraunchise and ther blissidnesse,
Put into exil and captyuyte
To lyue in labour, in wo and pensifnesse,
Thoruh fals desirs off pompous wilfulnesse,
To the Serpent whan thei gaff credence,
The Lord mistristyng thoruh inobedience.

972

Thus Adam
and Eve fell,

976

But, o allas, where-as thei were fre,
Off ioie eternal stood in sekirnesse,
Thei were to blynde — allas, it was pite! —
To leue ther reste and lyue in werynesse,
Al ther offspryng to bryngyn in distresse,
Drawyng fro God his due reuerence
Thoruh fals consentyng to inobedience.

980

984

and brought
their
offspring
into distress.

959. a] *om.* J, H 5.

962. entre ageyn] ageyn entre H, R, R 3. 966. the] *om.* H.

972. pestilence] offence H. 980. mystrustyng H.

Princes,
beware of
insolence
and pride,

Wherefore, ye Pryncis, ausili doth see, 988
As this tragedie in maner berth wnesse,
Where-as wantith in any comounte
Subieccioun, for lakkyng off meeknesse,
And with pouert pride hath an interesse, 992
Ther folwith afftir thoruh froward insolence
Among the peeple fals inobedience.

remember
that your
subjects will
deal with
you as you
deal with
them.

And, noble Pryncis, which han the souereynte
To gouerne the peeple in rihtwisnesse, 996
Lik as ye cherisshe hem in pes and vnyte,
Or frowardli destroie hem or oppresse,
So ageynward ther corages thei will dresse
Lowli tobeie to your magnyficence, 1000
Or disobeie bi inobedience.

[How Nembroth bilt the toure of babilone to saue
him from noyous flodis which for his pride was
put fro his magnificence and his toure with
sodeyne leveyne smyten down.]¹

Only eight
people were
saved from
the Deluge,

MYN auctour Bochas, as he that vndirstood
The vengauces & myscheuis huge
Which that God took with Noes Flood, 1004
Whan he sente an vniuersel deluge,
Ageyn[e]ls which there was no refuge,
Sauf eihte personis in that mortal wo
Withynne a ship were sauyn and no mo. 1008

therefore my
author passes
ouer to
Nimrod.

Wherefore myn auctour lihtli ouergoth,
Makith off that age no special remembraunce,
But passeth ouer from Adam to Nembroth,
Consid[e]ryng how in that dedli chaunce 1012
The Lord for synne took so gret vengauce,
That be writyng off cronique nor historie,*
Off hih nor low was lefft[e] no memorie.

During the
Flood all
books were
destroyed,

For ther was lefft cronicle noon nor book 1016
Afftir the Flood, that made mencion
Off noon auctour, who-so list to look;

991. lakkyng] lak H. 994. 6. poeple R. 1007. eihte] viij B.
1014. cronique nor historie] story nor victoire B, H, R 3,
P, stories nor victorie J; story nor victoire is altered to
cronique nor histoire in R. 1015. memoire B.

¹ MS J. leaf 6 recto.

For al was brouht to destruccioun
 Bi a deluge, withoute excepcioun, 1020
 For which myn auctour transportid hath his stile,
 And off that tyme list nothyng compile.

He fond no mater wheron he myht founde
 Nor sette his foot, bi noon auctorite, 1024
 Nor no trouthe his purpos on to grounde
 Off old[e] writyng that he coude see;
 For which hym thouhte, off necessite
 The surplusage off al that tyme lete, 1028
 And afftir Adam with Nembroth for to meete.

And certis, lich as Bochas in this book
 Remembrith first off Adam the storye,
 So next in ordre he the story took 1032
 To speke off Nembroth and his surquedie, a proud king.
 Which heere in erthe, as bookis specefie,
 Afftir the Flood his wawes gan asswage,
 Was maad a lord to gouerne in that age. 1036

For whan the floodis begonne* to discrese,
 And God his vengauce gan to modefie,
 Withdrouh his hand, the watir tho gan cese,
 Vpon the mounteyns hie off Armenye 1040
 The shipp gan reste, the Bible can nat lye;
 And in that age, callid the secounde,
 Lynage off man be-gan a-geyn tabounde.

Tencrese ageyn and to multeplie, 1044
 And bi discent, in bookis ye may see
 Specefied the genealogie,
 How that oon Chiris, cosyn to Noe,
 A man that tyme off gret auctorite, 1048
 Onto this Nembroth, the story doth assure,
 The fadir was, as bi engendrure.

This Nembroth wex myhti, large and long, [p. 15]
 Excelling othere as off his stature, 1052
 Surquedous, hardi and riht strong,
 And in his tyme gret labour myht endure,
 And in his force so moche he dede assure,

1024. foot] feet R.

1026. altered into: Of Olde writyng eke coude he nothing se, R.

1035. his] is R.

1037. begonne] began B, R, H. 1055. he] om. R.

so my author
found no
material until
he came to
Nimrod,After the
Floodmen began
to increase
again.Nimrod was
mighty and
bold,

- That ther was noon on watir nor on lond 1056
Which durste presume his power to withstond.
- called Prince
of Hunting, And his noblesse mor to magnefie
In worldli worshepe, bi report off his glorie,*
He was callid cheeff prynce off venerie, 1060
Desirous euer for to han victorie
Off beestis wilde, to be put in memorie
And haue a pris amongis these champiouns,
Tigres to daunte, bores and leouns. 1064
- feared by
man and
beast. Ther was no beeste in wodes so sauage
That durste ageyn hym make resistance;
His furious ire so mortal was and rage,
The erthe quook for feer off his presence, 1068
Til atte laste in his aduertence,
As a prynce deuoidid off al grace,
Ageyn[e]s God he gan for to compace.
- He began
to conspire
against God, He made a maner coniuracioun, 1072
This froward geant, and a conspiracie,
Took his counseil bi fals collusioun,
His myht, his power for to magnefye,*
And his estat for to glorefie, 1076
Thouhte he wolde off his entent nat faile
God and the heuene proudli to assaile.
- and thought
he would
secure him-
self against
another
Deluge That maugre God, which [that] gouernyth all,
He thouhte he wolde proudli take on honde, 1080
Ageyn deluges, yiff any falle shall,
Off prouidence pleyynli hem withstonde,
Hymself tassure & make a place on londe
That sholde hym keepe & been to hym diffence 1084
Bothe a-geyn God and watris violence.
- And that thei myhte acomplisse ther entent
Lich ther desir, thei dedyñ ther labour,
Took ther counseil al be oon assent, 1088
Chose Nembroth ther duc, ther gouvernour
Hem to conveie and doon to hem socour,
To been ther guide, afforn as thei were war,
Toward a contre which callid is Sennar, 1092

1058. his] *om.* R.

1059, 61, 62. gloire, victoire, memoire B, R, J.

1075. magnefye] multeplie B, J, H 5, R.

1079. which þat H; R, R 3, H 5, P agree with B.

- In compas wise round a-boute closid
 With a gret flood namyd Eufates.
 Ther straunge foli which thei han purposid,
 For to fulfille thei wer nat rek[el]les: 1096
 This to seyne, thei put hemsilff in pres,
 So hih a tour for to edefie,
 Which that sholde surmounte a-boue the skie,
 That thei sholde greued be no more, 1100
 With no deluge brouht to destruccioun,
 Nor that watres may nat greue hem sore,
 This was the fyn off ther entencioun.
 And off that tour & myhti strong dongoun, 1104
 Geyn God and floodis hemsiluen to assure,
 The heihte and largesse were off o mesure.
 Thus off Nembroth encresen gan the name;
 And in the peeplis reputacioun, 1108
 Off gold and riches he hadde so gret a fame,
 Thei callid hym god in ther opynyoun,
 Most eurous, most myhti off renoun,
 The world al hool vndir his obeissaunce, 1112
 As god and lord he took the gouernaunce.
 Vndir whos myht the peeples gan proceede,
 He as a lord hauyng inspeccioun,
 Pershyng the bowell[s] off the erthe in deede 1116
 To make myhti ther fundacioun;
 And off fals glory and veyn ambicioun,
 This proude Nembroth in his appetit,
 To seen hem werke hadde ful gret delit. 1120
 His ioie was and his inward gladnesse
 To beholde so gret a cumpanye
 Percen the erthe bi so gret depnesse,
 To make the ground[e] strong bi masounrye, 1124
 The werk vpward for to fortefie,
 With many a ston, huge & large off weihte,
 Thei han it reisid vp in the heir off heihte.
 And fynali bi mediacioun 1128
 Off this gret werk Nembroth wex famous,
 Takyng in herte gret consolacioun,

by building
a high tower.

Nimrod's reputa-
tion grew;
he was con-
sidered a
god, and
governed the
whole world.

He rejoiced
in the build-
ing of his
tower,

and in his
riches and
fame.

1099. that] *om.* H.

1116. bowell R 3, H, bouel R, bowels J, bowelles H 5, bowels P.

1123. Persyng H.

- That be report he was so glorious,
 Off so gret myht & off port so pompous, 1132
 That he was so myhti, riche and strong
 To reise a tour, so wid, so large, so long.
- The tower
 was called
 Babel, but
 now it is
 the lair of
 serpents and
 the air about
 it is in-
 fected.
- For to this day touchyng the grete myht [p. 16]
 Off this tour, which Babel yit men call, 1136
 Men fro ful ferr may han therof a syht,
 For it surmountith othir touris all.
 Off which[e] werk thus it is befall,
 Off serpentis and many a gret dragoun 1140
 It is now callid cheeff habitacioun,
 That no man dar, as ferr as thei it see,
 For wikkid heir and for corrupcioun,
 Bi a gret space and bi a gret contre 1144
 Approche no neer that merueilous dongoun,
 So venymous is that mansioun
 And so horrible, no man dar approche,
 Lik to a mownteyn bilt off a craggi roche. 1148
- Yet it rises
 to the stars
- And as men seyn that haue had ther repair,
 This tour atteynyth onto the sterris cleer,
 And transcendith the regioun off the hair.
 The ston, the syment wer maad off such mateer, 1152
 And the ioynyng so stedfast and enteer,
 Thouh fir and watir bothe it dede assaile,
 Ful lite or nouht ther power sholde auaile.
- so mightily
 that no liv-
 ing creature
 ever saw
 another like
 it.
- It was maad so myhti to endure, 1156
 So weel assurid be disposicioun,
 That in this world no lyuyng creature
 Sauh neuer noon lik in comparisoun;
 Whos reryng up was cheeff occasioun, 1160
 And the richesse off the masounrye,
 Wherthoruh Nembroth off pride and surquedie
- Nimrod grew
 proud and
 thought him-
 self the equal
 of God,
- Dempte proudli, as in his auys,
 He transcendid all othre in noblesse, 1164
 Thouhte hymself most myhti & most wis,
 Felawe to God, as be liklynesse.
 But God, that can al worldli pride oppresse,
 And make pryncis eclipsen in ther glory, 1168
 Such as truste in thyngis transitory —
- who thereupon
 knocked down a
 great part of his
 tower and killed
 his workmen.
- The same Lord off his eternal myht,
 This tour which Nembroth list to edefie,
 He made with thondir & with leuene liht 1172

Theroff to falle a ful gret partie;
 The boistous wyndis and the rage skie,
 And Goddis power on the tother side,
 Gan thus a-bate a parcel off his pride. 1176

And in discence and fallyng off the stonys,
 Off the werkmen ful many a man was ded,
 And oppressid, ther bak Ibroke and bonys,
 The masounry with ther blood was red: 1180
 Yit proude Nembroth, that of this werk was hed,
 With al these signes his Lord ne list nat knowe,
 For which his pompe was afftir brouht ful lowe.

But Nimrod,
 angry and
 undaunted,

But in his errour procedith forth off newe,
 Thouhte he wolde gete hymselff a name,
 Off malencolie gan chaunge look and hewe,
 And gan also attempten and attame,
 For to encrece and magnefie his fame, 1188
 A newe tour to edefie a-geyn,
 Lik as God hadde be blynd & nothyng seyn.

started to
 build a new
 tower.

He wolde haue rauht up to the steris seuene
 Bassent off hem that gan hym first counsaile,
 Robbid God, & from hym rauht the heuene; 1192
 But who presumeth the Lord aboue tassaile,
 It were no resoun that he sholde auaille:
 Pryncis may weel ageyn hym crie loude,
 But his power may clipse with no cloude. 1196

He would
 have snatched
 the heavens
 from God,

For in the middis off his grete emprises,
 This proude Nembroth making his masouns
 For to compasse and castyn there deuises,
 Gemetriens in ther dyuysiouns, — 1200
 But God that hath his inspecciouns,
 Seyng thentent off eueri ertheli man,
 As he that is most myhti and best can 1204

but God
 knows the
 minds of all
 men,

Ageyn ther malis make resistance,
 Ther worldli power, ther domynacioun
 Off his onchaungable & most magnificence

1174. rage] Ragous H, ragious R 3, P.

1188. fame] name H.

1197. clipse] clippe R.

1199. masouns] mansiouns H.

1201. Gemetriens] Geometryens R, Geometries H 5, Geme-
 tries J, Gemetriciens R 3, Gemetriens H, P.

and can
punish the
pride of
princes.

He can chastise and ouerwhelme down — 1208
The pride off pryncis in eueri regioun,
Bexauple off Nembroth, a-noon as ye shal heer,
Whos pompe rauhte a-boue the sterris cleer.

God made a
confusion of
tongues

For whan his werkmen stood at auantage, 1212
And most were besi to his entencioun,
And to-fortyme spak al o language,
Al sodenli be transmutacioun
Ther was off tungen maad a dyuysioun, 1216
That in ther werkyng as thei gan abraide,
No man wiste what that othir saide.

and divided
the hearts of
the work-
men.

And it is likli accordyng with resoun, [p. 17]
So as the chaung was maad off ther languages, 1220
So off ther hertis was maad dyuysioun,
Bothe off ther will, and off ther corages;
And in descendyng off ther werkyng stages,
Ther was such chaung off brother onto brother, 1224
Lik straungers noon knew thentent off other.

Myn auctour trowith that this dyuersite
Was for ther gilt causid be vengauce,
And ellis God off riht and equite 1228
Disposid hath in his ordenauce
To been a-mong hem so gret a variaunce,
That thoruh the world thei sholde hemself deuyde,
And from Nembroth disseuere & nat a-bide. 1232

They quar-
relled with
one another
and forsook
the land of
Shinar.

Thei gan a-noon a-mong hemsilff disdeyne
To accepte this Nembroth for ther kyng;
Yit a-mong hem, in soth ther wer nat tweyne
Oon off a-nother that hadde cleer knowyng, 1236
Nor off ther speche that knew the pleyen menyng:
For which the contre off Sennar thei forsook,
And ech off hem a sondri contre took.

Nimrod's
efforts were
in vain.

Thei departid, made no lengere spacis, 1240
Folwyng the fortune off ther dyuysioun,
And gan to chese hem newe duellyng placis
In the parties off many a regioun;
And thus Nembroth was pryued & put down, 1244
And off Babel, the myhti famous tour,
He was no lengere callid possessour:

1220. maad] om. H.

1244. thus] this H.

For a-geyn the pride off this Nembroth
 Froward Fortune gan hir cours to varie,
 And God also was in maner wroth,
 Off surquedie that he was so contrarie;
 And for the place was wilde and solitarie
 Off this Sennar, furious and sauage,
 Nembroth gan feeble & falle into gret age.

He grew old
 and feeble,

1248

And yit summe bookis off hym specefie,
 He wix froward off his condicioun,
 And was first ground off ydolatrie
 And fyndere up off fals relegioun,
 Causyng peeplis to haue openyoun
 Goddis to worshepe in paganysme wise,
 Foundour off rihtis and off fals sacrefise.

and some
 books say
 he was the
 founder of
 idolatry.

1256

1260

Toward Perce he ches his duellyng-place,
 Which contre is in the orient;
 That his lordship sholde stretch a gret[e] space,
 He bounded hym into the occident:
 For Perce-lond haueth his extent
 Toward the parties of the Rede Se;
 And this land Perce, who-so list [to] see,

He went to
 live in Persia

1264

As bookis olde remembre and put in mynde —
 How that Perce costeith enviroun
 Septemtrion and the grettere Inde
 And many a-nothir myhti regioun,
 Wher Nembroth first hadde domynacioun,
 Which extendith, as bookis specefie,
 Out off Mede into Germanye.

1268 and ruled
 from Media
 to Germany.

1272

But in lordshipes, as myn auctour seith,
 Withoute that vertu be ther trewe guide,
 In hem ther is suraunce noon nor feith —
 Thyng that passith, which may no while abide;
 Wherefore Bochas, in despit off pride
 And in rebukyng off all folkis proude,
 Makyng his compleynt crieth to hem ful loude:

There is no
 security in a
 lordship
 without
 goodness.

1276

1280

1255. wix B, R, wexe J, wexe H 5, P, wex R 3.

1265. haueth] hath H. J.

1267. this] his this R.

1280. in] om. H.

1281. Makyng] Maketh R.

¶ The mater ageyn þe pride of princis.

[An exclamacioun of Bochas ageyn al proude men/
shewyng how god may them and theire pride
whan him best list by many dyuers menes and
wayes punysshē & chastise.]¹

You who
are proud,
who trust to
reign long,

YE all proude, most royall in *your* flouris,
Which that most truste for to regne longe,
Dressith up *your* rochis & *yōur* touris, 1284
And ageyn God make *your*-siluen stronge,
And lat *your* power proudli vndirfonge
Your-silff with pride for to magnefie,
Ageyns the heuene to holden chaumpartie. 1288

build your
huge castles,
let your men-
at-arms keep
watch,

Beeldith *your* castellis, reiseth hem vp on heihte
Off adamantis [with iren] stronge Ibounde,
With squar[e] stonys, large & huge off weihte,
Reise up *your* wallis, most myhti and profounde, 1292
And shet *your* dongouns with myhti cheynys rounde,
Let men off armys, who-euer wake or sleepe,
Nyht & day *your* wacch so streihtli keepe,

as if God
were unable
to take
vengeance.
on you!

As God nor man, in *your* qpynyouns, [p. 18] 1296
Your forteressis ne myhte nat assaile,
Your castellis nor *your* stronge dongouns
Stuffid with men and plente off vitaile,
Lik to stonde euere and neuere for to faile, 1300
As God nat myhte a-geyn *your* fals puissaunce
Whan-euer hym list off riht to do vengauce!

Set before
your blind
eyes the
pride of
Nimrod.

Settith afforn *your* eyen that be blynde
The monstrous werk off grete Babiloun; 1304
The pride off Nembroth ther was put behynde,
Maugre his myht, and his tour smet down:
For al the crafft off werkman or masoun
Destroied was with a sodeyn leuene, 1308
Tauenge his pride sent a-down fro heuene.

Though your
power be
great, God
will con-
found you.

For thowh *your* strengthes so assurid be,
That noon engyn may therto atteyne,
Gunne nor bumbard bi no subtilite, 1312

1290. with iren] *om.* B, R, H, R 3, P; with Irons stronge
bounde H. 5.

1293. myhti cheynys] cheynes myhti R.

1289, 98. Castell H.

1312. Bombard H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 7 verso.

Shot off arblast nor touch off dundeyne;
Yit God that is lord and souereyne,
Which lich desertis can bothe spille and saue,
Mai al confounde with an erthe-quaue.

1316

Myn auctour axith, what castel or what tour
May be so strong[e] maad in any wise,
But that be mene off sum fals tretour,
Or be sum weie that he can deuise,
It may be lost or sold for couetise
And delyuered, for al ther stronge bondis,
Into the power off enmyes hondis.

1320

The strongest
of castles
may be lost
by treason

Or bi sum other sodeyn auenture,
Castellis, citees and many a riche toun
Han been lost; thei myhte hem nat assure
For to resiste a-geyn[e]s fals tresoun:
Summe ha be lost eek bi rebellioun;
And alle these menys, the trouthe to be-gynne,
Ys but punshyng which God sent for synne.

1324

or rebellion.

1328

God hath a thousand handis to chastise,
A thousand dartis off punycioun,
A thousand bowes maad in vnkouth wise,
A thousand arblastis bent in his dongoun,
Ordeyned echon for castigacioun;
But where he fynt meeknesse & repentaunce,
Mercy is maistresse off his ordynaunce.

1332

God can
punish if he
will, and
shew mercy
where he
finds re-
pentance.

1336

Ye that be wise, considreth how the roote
Off vicis alle is pride, ye may weel see;
Pullith hym down and put hym vndir foote
And tak your counseil off humilite:
And yff ye list [to] stonde in surete,
Beeldith in herte for mor sekirnesse
A tour off vertues groundid on meeknesse,

1340

Pride is the
root of all
vices; build
in your
hearts a
tower of
virtues.

1344

Whos masonrie is off no costage,
Off vertues ground and souereyne,
Blast off wyndis and off wedris rage,
Nor no tempest hasti nor sodeyne,
Pompe nor bost, thouth thei doon her peyne,

1348

It will stand
forever.

1313. arowblast J, arrowblast H 5 — dundeyne] dundeyne R,
Dondeyn H, donzeyne J, doudeyn R 3, dundayn H 5,
dondine P.

1325. Castell H.

1335. echon ordeyned H.

1342. to] om. H, R.

This vertu meeknesse for to vndirmyne, —
Thei be to feeble to make hire for tenclyne.

Meekness
conquers all
worldly
trouble.

For wher meeknesse is groundid verrailly, 1352

Thouh he sumwhile feeble aduersite,
He passith ouer and suffreth paciently
And venguisshith al maner enmite,
Thassaut also and the contrariouste 1356
Off infortune, and off worldli trouble,
And off victory conquereth a palme double.

And thouh meeknesse a-myd the flodis flowe
Off worldli myscheeff and persecucioun, 1360
Whil Pacience in hir boot doth rowe,
Thouh froward wawes posse hir up & doun,
A calm shal folwe off consolacioun,
Whan sterne wyndis ther blastis ha[ue] leid lowe, 1364
The name off meeknesse shal shewe & be knowe.

She may be
sorely tried,
but she will
win in the
end.

She may be troublid, but ouercome neuere;
But for a tyme she may suffer werre,
But atte eende she venquisshith euere, 1368
On londe and se, wher she be nyh or ferre:
To the hauene off lyff she was our lodesterre,
I take record on the humylite
Off Mary, so blissid mut she be. 1372

The roote off meeknesse flourith up so faire,
Whos beute dredith no tribulaciouns;
In somer, wyntir his flouris nat appaire,
And hir frut last in al maner sesouns: 1376
Pride may assaile with his bostful souns,
But fynaly for hir encres off glorie,
With humblesse she wynnith the victorie.

[Lenvoy.]

You who
have read
this tragedy,
take heed to
Meekness,

O FOLKIS all that this tragedie reede, [p. 19] 1380
Haueth to meeknesse a-mong your aduertence,
Off proude Nembroth also takith heede,
How that he fill from his magnificence,
Onli for he be sturdi violence 1384
List off malis the myhti Lord assaile,
But in such caas what myht his pride auaile?

1351. for tenclyne] to inclyne H, the entire line is written in
a later hand. 1370. our] be J, the H 5.
1371. on] off R. 1381. Haueth] hath H.

Noble Pryncis, which that this world posseede,*

Ye that be famous off wisdam and prudence,

1388

and, Princes,
let not your
pride oppress
the poor.

And han so many subiectis, that you dreede,

In gouernaunce vndir your excellence,

Lat your power with meeknesse so dispence,

That fals[e] pride oppresse nat the poraile,

1392

Which to your noblesse so moche may auaile.

Pride of Nembroth dede the bridil leede,

Which hym conueied to gret insolence;

Pride apperteneth nothyng to manheede,

1396

Remember
the pride of
Nimrod.

Sauf in armys to shewen his presence —

Wherfore honour, laude and reuerence

Be to meeknesse, that hath the gouernaile

Off alle vertues man may most auaile.

1400

[How many yeres was betwixt Adam and Nembroth
and betwixt Nembroth and Cadmus and of other
kynges.]¹

THESE olde poetis with ther sawes swete

Ful couertli in ther vers do feyne,

How olde Saturne was whilom kyng of Crete,

And off custum dede his besy peyne,

1404

Saturn was
once king of
Crete. He
devoured his
children as
they were
born.

Off his godhed list for to ordeyne

That he sholde, as off his nature,

Echon deuoure as by his engendrure.

In this mateer shortli to sojourne,

1408

His name
means time,
which brings
all things to
nought,

To vndirstonde off poetis the processe,

Thei meene pley[n]li that this woord Saturne

Doth in it-silff nothyng but tyme expresse;

And philisophres bere also witnesse,

1412

That as in tyme, foorth euery thyng is brouht,

So tyme ageynward bryngith euery thing to nouht.

Clerkis recorde eek in ther writyng,

Vndir support as I dar reherse,

1416

and is more
powerful
than iron
or fire.

How that fir wastith euery thyng,

And iren hard doth nesshe thynges perse;

Yiff auht a-bitt that they may nat transuerse,

Yit comyth tyme, and bi contynuaunce,

1420

And al consumeth with his sharpe launce.

1387. posseede] doþ posseede B, R, do possede J, H 5 — that]

om. J, H 5. 1403. was] om. H. 1407. engendrure] engendure R.

1411. it-silff] þe silff H. 1416. I is misplaced after reherse R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 8 recto.

His sharp[e] toth of consumpcioun
 In stille wise doth his besi cure
 For to anentise, in conclusioun, 1424
 Alle thyng that is brouht foorth bi Nature,
 Bi long abidyng thei may hem nat assure;
 For olde thyngis deuourid men may see,
 Fer out off mynde, as thei neuer had be. 1428

The passing
 of years
 causes the
 greatness of
 men to fade.

Who can or may remembre in any wise
 The glorious prowesse off these pryncis olde,
 Or the noblesse of philosophres wise,
 Or off poetis the feynyng to onfolde: 1432
 Processe off yeris, alas! as I you tolde,
 Deuoured hath ther fame and ther noblesse,
 Derkid ther renoun bi foryetilnesse.

Their names
 are forgotten.

Thus off ther namys is lefft no memory, 1436
 Tyme* with his rasour hath doon so gret vengeance,
 Shauen a-wey the honour and the glory
 Off many a noble, ful myhti off puissance,
 That there is lefft now no remembrance 1440
 Off pryncis, poetis, nor off philosophres;
 For whan that deth nailéd hem in ther cofres,

Time wastes
 and destroys
 all things.

Kam tyme vpon, and bi processe off yeeris
 Ther memory hath duskid and ther mynde, 1444
 And reuolucioun off the heuenli speeris,
 Bi offte turnyng ther glory hath lefft behynde:
 Thus euery thyng which subiect is to Kynde,
 Is* in this liff withoute mor auauntage 1448
 Wastid with tyme and processe off long age.

In the
 earliest age
 Fortuna was
 steadfast.

In the firste age from Adam to Noe,
 Prudent listres, which list in bookis reede,
 Fynde off Fortune no mutabilite, 1452
 Nor off hir chaungis took[e] tho noon hede;
 But from Adam ther reknyd been in deede
 Onto Nembroth, bi turnyng off the heuene,
 A thousand yeer, seuene hundrid and elleuene. 1456

From the
 time of
 Adam to
 Nimrod noth-
 ing notable
 happened.

In which[e] space, who that considreth weel,
 Ther be no thyngis write in special,*
 Digne off memorie nor spoke off neueradeel,

1424. aventisshe J, anentissh H 5. 1432. feynyng] feyng R.
 1437. Tyme] Tymes B, R. 1443. and] om. R.
 1445. And] And the R — the] om. R.
 1448. Is] As B, R. 1450. to] vn to H. 1457. considre H.
 1458. write] writen R — special] especial B.

- Which that be notable nor historial; 1460
 But fro the tyme Nembroth hadde a fal,
 Onto Cadmus the yeeris to contene,
 Thei were a thousand, foure hundrid & fourtene.
- Touchyng [this] Cadmus, as Bochas list
 tendite, [p. 20] 1464 Vixoses was
the first king
of Egypt.
- It is rehercid bi rethoriciens,
 How oon Vixoses, in bookis as thei write,
 Was maad first kyng off the Egipcien*,
 Where philisophres & nygromancien 1468
 Gan first tabounde ther renoun to auauce,
 Nachor that tyme hauyng the gouernaunce
- Off the Hebreus, as maad is mencion —
 Aftir Nembroth, bi trewe rehersaile, 1472 and Nahor
then ruled
the Jews.
- Thre hundred yer bi computacioun,
 Four score & tuelue, which tyme, it is no faile,
 That Vixorses gan to werre & eek bataile 1476 Vixoses won
all Egypt by
might of
arms, but
his name
has been
forgotten.
- Off volunte geyn straunge naciouns,
 And to conquere citees, burwes [&] touns.
- Bi force onli, withoute title off riht,
 He wan al Egipt to encrece his name;
 But for al that, who list to haue a siht, 1480
 There is now lefft no report off his fame,
 Sauf Bochas writ, how he first dede attame
 His myhti conquest off entencioun
 That the glory and the hih renoun 1484
- Ascryued were onto his worthynesse,
 And the residue and the surplusage
 Off gold, off tresor, off good & off richesse
 Turne sholde to comoun auauantage 1488 He parted
the plunder
among his
subjects.
- Off al his peeppe, that euery maner age
 Reporte myhte, it was to hym mor nerre
 Boue syngulerte his comouⁿ to preferre.
- ¶ Eek Thanaus off Cithie first kyng,
 Whan Saruch was duk & souereyne 1492 Thanaus
conquered
Scythia.
 Ouer* the Iewes, be record off writyng, —

1463. foure] iiii B. 1464. this] om. R. H.
 1467. The gipcien B. 1470. Nakor H. 1474. twelue] xij B.
 1475. Vixorses B, R, Vixoses J, H, H 5, P, vixioses R 3 —
 werre] werrey H.
 1479. to encrece] tencres of H, to encrease of P, to thencrece
 R 3. 1481. fame] name R. 1491. syngulert R.
 1492. Thanaus] tanaus R, Thonans J, Thomys H, Thomas
 H 5, P, thanas R. 3. 1494. Ouer] Euer B, R.

- Too hundred yeer, sexti and eek tweyne
 Afftir Nembroth, this Tanaus gan ordeyne 1496
 A myhti power and a strong bataile
 Hem off Cithie proudli to assaile,
- His name too
 is forgotten. Conquering fro then onto the ile
 Callid Ponto, in ful cruel wise: 1500
 And thouh his lordship last nat but a while,
 Al that he wan, it was for couetise;
 And as Bochas doth off these folk deuise,
 Processe off yeris, for al ther gret puissaunce, 1504
 Hath put ther namys out off remembraunce.
- Of Zoroaster
 we know
 nothing, ex-
 cept that he
 laughed the
 hour he was
 born. ¶ Zorastres eek, for al his grete myht,
 Off Bactrians kyng and possessour,
 Lord off Trace and a ful manli knyht, 1508
 Off all his dedis and off his gret labour,
 Off his conquest nor off his gret honour
 Is nothyng lefft, off wrytyng us befor,
 Sauf that he louh the hour whan he was born. 1512
- Ninus was
 another
 conqueror. He began ful soone to be merie,
 With sodeyn lauhtir at his natyuyte;
 And worthy Nynus, that was kyng off Assirie,
 Expowned his lauhtre to gret felicite, 1516
 The which[e] Nynus wan many a straunge cuntre,
 And day be day his power gan encrese,
 For which he wolde off his conquest nat cese.
- Such men
 are never
 satisfied until
 finally
 Fortune
 casts them
 down. For this the maner off these conqueroures: 1520
 Whan thei haue had in armis o victorie,
 Thei do ther myht, ther payne & ther laboures
 With newe emprises to be put in memorie;
 For ther corages, supprised with veynglorie, 1524
 Can nat be stille content in ther estat
 Til her parodie sey to hem chek-maat.
- Fortune off armys, in bōokis ye may reede,
 With a fals lauhtre on folkis thouh she smyle, 1528
 She froward euere, or thei can takyn heede,
 Off hir nature will falsly hem be-gyle;
 Conquest bi werre lastith but a whyle,

1496. Tanaus] thauance P, Thomvs H, Thomas H 5.
 1499. onto] In to H. 1500. Ponto] Ponte J.
 1506. Zorastres] Zorastes R 3, Zoroastres P, Zorastees R.
 1511. toform H. 1513. ful] wol R.
 1520. maner] mateer R.
 1528. a] om. R — folkis] bookis H.

For who bi deth doth sturdi violense,
God will bi deth his vengauce recompense.

1532

¶ This worthy Nynus gan myhtili preuaile
A-geyn Zorastres, off whom I spak tofore;
For he with hym fauht last in bataile,
In which Nynus hath hym so weel Ibore,
That Zorastres hath the feeld Illore.
And he was auctour, as bookis specefie,
Off fals magik and off nygromancie.

1536

Ninus de-
feated
Zoroaster,
who wrote
books of
magic,

1540

He fond the nature off euery element,
Ther kyndeli werkynge & ther mutaciouns,
The cours off sterris & off the firmament,
Ther influencis, ther disposiciouns,
Ther aspectis and ther coniunccions,
Wrot in peleris deuised off metall
The seuene sciencis callid liberall.

1544

Eek in pilers off brik ful harde Ibake, [p. 21]
Which were up set, longe, large & huge,
He gan eek write hem & to vndirtake
To make hem seur, as for ther refuge,
That thei sholde be flood nor [no] deluge
Diffacid been, as off ther scripture,
But in ther grauyng perpetueli endure.

1548

and caused
the seven
sciences to
be inscribed
on strong
pillars, that
they might
endure
forever.

1552

But thouh Zorastres this crafft first out fond,
Ful lite or nouht to hym it myhte auaile;
And thouh he were a good knyht off his hond,
He was off Nynus slay[e]n in bataile,
Loste his rewme and royal apparaile;
And Nynus deide withynne a litil throwe,
But in what wise the story is nat knowe.

1556

But Ninus
slew him
in battle,
and soon
after he
also died.

1560

¶ Eek Moideis kyng off Sodomee,
I fynde off hym no memory be writyng,
Sauff in a story, as men may reede and see,
He and his peple were fre in ther lyuyng;
But he that was off Assiriens kyng,
Thoruh fals Fortune, that can so offte varie,
To Babiloyne made hem tributarie.

1564

The people of
Sodom were
free in their
living.

1568

1535. A-geyn] geyn H — to forne H. 1537. borne H.
1548. brik] breke H.
1552. no] om. R, H 5.
1554. endure] to endure R.
1567. offten H.

Pharaoh and
his men were
drowned in
the Red Sea,

¶ We han eek sey[e]n and rad also
The vengauces and the pestilence
Doon in Egipt to kyng Pharao,
For that he made a maner resistance
Ageyn[e]s God, off wilful necligence;
Therfore his peeple vpon a day and he
Were dreynt echon amynd the Rede Se.

1572

but Moses
and the Jews
passed safely.

The peeplis off God lad be Moyses,
Without trouble off any maner wawe,
Wente echon sauf in quiete & in pes;
And Pharao, as he gan afftir drawe
Hem to pursue, bi a ful mortal lawe,
In his pursut froward and atteynt,
A-mong the wawes with his host was dreynt.

1576

In Exodus
we read
about the
Twelve
Plagues,

In Exodo ben the mencions
Ceriously put in remembraunce,
The twelue plagues and persecuciouns
In Egipt doon, bi ful gret vengauce;
And off ther tresor & ther gret substaunce
Thei were despoilid bi Hebreus, it is told,
Off ther vesselis off siluer & off gold.

1584

1588

and how the
Jews robbed
the Egyptians.

And out off Egipt ful gret tresor thei ladde,
Such as thei thouhte myhte hem most auaille;
And Pharao, I fynde that he hadde
Too hundrid charis enarmyd for bataile,
Hem to pursue and proudli to assaile,
And fifti thousand, in whom ther was no lak,
Off men off armys folwyng on horsbak.

1592

1596

Pharaoh pur-
sued them,
but lost his
life because
he was
proud and
obstinate.

Too hundred thousand off footmen hym aboute,
And off Egipt al this cheualrie;
And Pharao with al [t]his gret[e] route
Gan Israel pursuen off envie,
But for his pride and fals surquedie,
He and his peeple wer downyd euerichon,
Off al his noumbre ther was lefft nat oon.

1600

His froward herte a-geyn God indurat,
Fulfillid off malis and obstynacie,
And [in] his purpos proud and obstynat:

1604

1569. eek] *om.* J, H 5.

1576. peeplis] peeples H.

1579. gan] can R.

1583. exodi J, Exody P, H 5.

1585. twelue] xij B.

1606. in] *om.* R.

These foule vicis, or he koude hem espie,
 From his glory and his regalie 1608
 He was cast doun, thouh he tofforn was crownyd,
 A-myd the se a-mong his peeple drownyd.

[Off Oggigus, kyng of Thebes.]¹

¶ A-nothir prynce callid Oggigus,
 Kyng off Thebes, as bookis determyne, 1612
 And foundour was, thus Bochas tellith us,
 Off a cite callid Eleusyne,
 Which stant in Grece, whos power to declyne
 Ther fill a flood in that regioun, 1616
 Which ouerflowed ful many a royal toun.
 And in Achaia it dede most damage,
 Tyme off Iacob, the patriark notable;
 And this deluge with his wawes rage 1620
 Slouh lordis manye, & pryncis honourable:
 For dame Fortune is so deceyuable,
 That she sumwhile, whan she list disdeyne,
 Can folk assaile with a flood sodeyne. 1624
 This flood also, where it dede assaile,
 Wastid cornys bothe crop and roote,
 Causid also scarsete off vetaile,
 That many a man felte ful vnsoote; 1628
 The pore nat wiste wher to fynde boote,
 For ther pryncis supprisid were with dreed,
 Thoruh lak off vitaile in that grete need.

[Off a grete Flood in Tessalie.]²

¶ Anothir flood there was in Thessalie, [p. 22] 1632
 In the tyme whan kyng Amphioun
 Heeld the sceptre and the regalie
 Vpon Thebes the myhti stronge toun,
 Beside the kyngdam off Semalioun, 1636
 This same tyme, this flood, ful dout[e]les,
 Whan Goddis peeple was lad be Moises.
 With this flood the land hadde be deuourid
 Off Thessalie, and al that regioun, 1640
 But on Pernaso the peeple was socourid,

Ogygus
founded
Eleusis in
Greece,

where there
was a great
flood in the
time of
Jacob.

There was
another flood
in Thessaly,

but the
people found
refuge on
the hills of
Parnassus.

1639. the] this H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 9 recto.

² MS. J. leaf 9 verso.

And on the rochis that stoden enviroun
Fond ther refut, to ther sauacioun,
And gret socour, til the flodis rage 1644
Gan disencrece, withdrawn & asswage.

During
Cecrops'
reign in
Athens, there
was a plague
of heat

¶ In olde stories ye may also see,
Whan Cicraps hadde first possessioun
Off Athenes the myhti strong cite, 1648
An heete ther fill in that regeoun,
Be influence that descendid doun
From all the bodies aboue celestially,
Which likli was for to deuouren all. 1652

called the
Embracing
of Phaeton.

And this hete engendrid off the sunne,
In dyuers cuntrees, bothe in lengthe & breede,
Hath his cours so myhtili begunne
That many folkis fillyn in gret dreede — 1656
Ryuers, wellis, who that list taken heede,
Consumed were and dreied up echon,
The hete callid thenbracyng off Pheton.

[Off goodly Isis, Wiff to Apys kyng of Argyue slayn
bi his broþer Tyffeus.]¹

Isis, daughter
of Prometheus,
married Apis,
king of
Argos.

¶ We haue eek rad in stories heer-tofforn, 1660
How that Ysis to Egipt took hir fliht
Out off Grece, the trewe douhter born
Off Promotheus, a ful manly knyht;
And this Ysis in euery manys siht 1664
So fressh, so goodli, weddid bi hir lyue
To worthi Apis, that was kyng off Argyue.

She was very
beautiful
and a ward
of her uncle
Epimetheus.

The which Ysis, excellyng off beute,
Aftyr tyme hir fadir was Igraue, 1668
She was Iput for mor surete
With hir vncl, that sholde keepe & saue
This seid[e] maide, that no man sholde hir haue;
And hir vncl, in Ouyde-ye may see, 1672
Lik as he writ, was callid Epymethe.

Jupiter fell
in love with
her

And flouryng up in hir tendir age,
This seid Ysis so plesant was & meete,
Off semlynnesse, off look & off visage, 1676

1644. til] to H.

1646. also may H, R 3, all so 3e may H 5, also ye may P.

1651. scelestially H. 1653. off] first of H.

1657. list taken] listen tak R. 1668. tyme] om. R.

1669. put R, R 3, putte H 5. 1671. This] þe H.

¹MS. J. leaf 9 verso.

That Iubiter, the myhti kyng off Creete,
Was enamerid with hir for to meete;
And she, excitid off femynyte,
Enclynyd hir herte onto his deite.

1680

And for she was off hir entent so cleene,
Obeieng hym in most lowli wise,
Off Argyuois he maad hir to be queene.
Because that she was smet in couetise,
Ageyn Argus a werre she gan deuise,
And for he was vnweeldi off his age,
Hir to withstonde he fond non auauntage.

and made
her queen of
the Argives.
She warred
on Argus,

1684

But yit Fortune gan vp[on] hir frowne,
And kyng Argus thoruh his subtilite,
With his counseil so prudentli gan rowne,
That she was take bi ful gret cruelte,
And hir soudeours were eek made* to fle;
And bi Argus, ther geyned no ransoun,
She fetrid was & put in strong presoun.

1688 who captured
her and put
her in prison,

1692

But hir sone, the god Mercurius,
Riht fressh, riht lusti & ful off hardynesse,
And off his herte inli coraious,
Ageyn[es] Argus gan his power dresse,
And so entierli dede his besynesse
That he was slay[e]n, in conclusioun,
And Ysis afftir delyuerid fro prisoun.

1696 but her son
Mercury
slew Argus
and set her
free.

1700

Off hir slehtis afftirward nat feynt,
She took a ship and into Egipt wente,
In which[e] ship ther was a cow depeynt;
And Mercury,* whom Iupiter eek sent,
Is gon with hir, bothe off oon entent,
To make a mariage afftir a-noon riht
Twen hir and Apis, a prynce off ful gret myht.

1704 She then
took ship to
Egypt and
married Apis.

1708

She was riht wis boue* othir creatures,
Secret off cunnyng, weel expert in science,
She tauhte first lettres and figures
To Gipciens be pleyn experience,
Gaff hem cunnyng and intelligence

1712 She taught
the Egyp-
tians how to
write and to
till their
land,

1680. deite] darte R. 1688. vpon] vp R.

1692. made] fayn B, R — eek] also J, H 5.

1705. Mercury] Cheurie R, B, Cheury H, thouris J, thoures
H 5, Mercury P.

1709. boue] about B, R, H, J, P, H 5.

To tile ther land, tauhte ther laboreris
To sowe ther greyn & multeplie bi yeris.

and was
worshiped
as a goddess.

And in Egipt hir fame and hir renoun [p. 23] 1716
Gan day be day wexe and hir worthynesse,
Holde off cunnyng and reputacioun
Be signes shewed, nat onli a prynesse,
But she was holde a-mong hem a goddesse, 1720
And with worshepis which that were dyuyn
And sacrefises, to hir thei dede encline.

Apis, her
husband, son
of Jupiter
and Niobe,

But to declare pleyntli at a woord,
A-myd[des] al hir gret prosperite, 1724
Myhti Apis, hir husbonde and hir lord,
Prynce off Egipt and duk off that cuntre,
Sone off Iubiter and off Nyobe,
Which Nyobe, bi lynage descendyng, 1728
The douhter was off Phoroneus the kyng —

was cruelly
slain by his
brother
Typhon,

¶ And Phoroneus first the lawes fond
To which al Grece stant vndir obeissaunce,
And the statutis off that myhti lond 1732
Were establisshid bi his ordynaunce —
But for to write the vnhappi chaunce
Off kyng Apis, as it is remembrid,
He slay[e]n was and pitousli dismembrid 1736

Bi his brother callid Tiffeus,
Sumwhat off hatrede, but mor for couetise;
For Tiffeus was inli desirous
To reioishe in ful mortal wise 1740
The myhti kyngdam, as ye han herd deuise,
Off Argyuoyis to haue possessioun,
Preferrid be moordre & fals successioun.

and after-
wards be-
came the
god Serapis.

And whan that Ysis fond hir lord so ded, 1744
Off entent that he were magniefied,
First off wisdam she gan takyn heed,
Ordeyned a mene that he were deified,
Hih a-mong goddis to be stelled, 1748
In Egipt templis maad hym to be stallid,
And god Serapis afftir he was callid.

1718. and] & off R.

1720. a-mong hem] ther R.

1738. off] for H.

1743. fals] bi R.

[[O]ff Grisiton þat hes membres ete for hunger.]¹

- ¶ What shal I write off the cas horrible
 Off Erisiton, with hungir so constreynyd, 1752 Erysichthon
 That his liff was to hymselff odible, sold his
 In Thesalie with indigence peynyd; daughter
 And pitousli his fame was disteynyd, for hunger.
 Whan he solde his douhter in seruage, 1756
 Liriope, which was but yong off age,
 Beschaung off gold to purueie hym vitaille,
 Off verray neede he was so wo-begon; and after-
 He hadde no thyng that myhte his thrust auaille, 1760 wards, alas,
 Nor staunche his hungir with gnawying on a bon, ate his
 Wherefore he eet his membris oon bi oon. members.
 A prynce, allas, was it nat pite
 To seen hym deie in such aduersite! 1764
 ¶ We han eek rad, ful many a day tofor,
 The grete baneshyng and proscriptioun,
 Off Argyuois how kyng Gelanor
 Was crueli put from his regeoun; 1768 Danaus,
 And his lieges, off indignacioun, founder of
 In his place thei sette oon Danaus, Argos,
 Sone and eek heir onto the god Belus.
 The peeppe off malis dēde hym so encoumbre, 1772 had fifty
 Tencrece his sorwe and his aduersite, daughters,
 And fifti douhtren he hadde also in noumbre, who married
 And Egistus his brother, eek parde the fifty sons
 Hadde fifti sonas, the story ye may see, of Egyptus.
 Atween the which bi surete off hond 1776
 In mariage there was maad a bond,
 Vndir which compassid was tresoun,
 Couertli thouh thei dede it hide. 1780 You will find
 But yiff ye list han cleer inspeccioun their story in
 Off this story vpon eueri side, Chaucer,
 Redith the legende of martirs off Cupide,
 Which that Chaucer, in ordre as thei stood, 1784
 Compiled off women that were callid good.

1752. Erisiton] Grisiton J, P, Grisitoun H 5, Herisiten R 3.

1755. fame] name R.

1771. the] om. R.

1783. Redith] Reed R —off] & R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 10 recto.

who also
told the
tale of
Philomela
and Procne.

¶ Touchyng the story off kyng Pandioun,
And off his goodli faire douhtren tweyne,
How Thereus, fals off condicioun, 1788
Hem to deceyue dede his besi payne,
Thei bothe namyd, off beute souereyne,
Goodli Progne and yong[e] Philomene,
Bothe innocentis and off entent ful cleene. 1792

It were pre-
sumption for
me to tell it
again.

Ther pitous fate in open to expresse,
It were to me but a presumpcioun,
Sithe that Chaucer dede his besynesse
In his legende, as maad is mencion, 1796
Ther martirdam and ther passioun,
For to reherse* hem dede his besy payne,
As cheef poete callid off Breteyne.

I will go on
to Cadmus;

Off goode women a book he dede write, [p. 24] 1800
The noubre compleet* fully off nynteene;
And there the story he pley[n]li dede endite
Off Tereus, off Progne &* Philomeene,
Where ye may seen ther legende, thus I meene, 1804
Doth hem worshepe & foorth ther liff doth shewe
For a cleer merour, because ther be so fewe.

but I am
sorry that
there are so
few good
women to
write about.

I will passe ouer and speke off hem no more,
And onto Cadmus foorth my stile dresse — 1808
Yit in my writyng it greueth me sore,
Touchyng off women off feith or stabilnesse, —
Blessid be God, — I fynde noon excesse;
And for ther been so fewe, as thynkith me, 1812
The goode sholde been had in mor deynte.

¶ Lenvoy.

This tragedy
told about
Saturn,

THIS tragedie bereth to you wisesse,
How Saturnus bi disposicioun,
Maliciousli of his frowardnesse 1816
Causith in Iune ful gret infeccioun,
She off nature conueieth the venym doun,
The hair infect, which no man may socoure,
Kometh deth a-noon, & all thyng doth deuoure. 1820

1787. And] *om.* H. 1798. reherse] rehersen B, R.

1801. compleet] vncompleet B, J, vncomplet H 5.

1802. pley[n]ly he did H.

1803. Tereus] Terence H, Therence R 3, P, Theseus J, H 5 —

&] & off B, R, H. 1804. ther] be H.

Tyme from Adam, myn auctour doth expresse,
 Doun to Nembroth bi successioun,
 His stile conueied bi gret auysynesse,
 From Zorastres to kyng Pharaoun; 1824
 Off too deluges he maketh menciou, two deluges,
 In Thesalie the vengauce gan laboure,
 And in Achaia Thebes to deuoure.
 Ye haue off hetis herd the gret excesse, 1828 and the
destruction
of princes
and princesses
 Off pryncis, pryncessis ful gret destruccioun,
 Off Egistus the gret[e] wrechidnesse,
 The furie off Tereus, the wo off Pandioun,
 Off the too sustren the confusioun, 1832
 And how ther fate gan vpon hem loure,
 Ther felicity vnwarli to deuoure.
 Pryncis, Pryncessis, your eyen doth up dresse —
 I meene the eyen off your discrecioun — 1836 Princes, re-
member that
Fortuna is
deceitful.
 Seeth off this world the chaung, the doubilnesse,
 The gret onseurnesse, the variacioun,
 And aduertisith, for al your hih renoun,
 Fortunes dewes, whan thei most suetli shoure, 1840
 Than is she falsest, your glorie* to deuoure.

[How Iubiter rauished Europe, and how Cadmus
was sent/to seke hir in diuers Regions.]¹

BE rehersaile off many an old poete,
 Be discent the lyne conueied doun, Jupiter
succeeded
Saturn,
 Next Saturnus, the myhti kyng off Crete, 1844
 Ioue was crownyd bi successioun,
 As next heir bi procreacioun,
 Aftir his fadir the lond to enherite,*
 Regned in Crete, as poetis list to write. 1848
 Sone off the lynage, as I you tolde afforn,
 Off the goddis most souereyn and enteere, and chose
Europa to be
his wife.
 Yit thow he was off blood so hih I-born,
 He ches Europa for to been his feere, 1852
 And doun descendid from his heuenli speere,
 As he that was, for al his deite,
 Supprisid in herte with hir gret beute.

1831. Tereus] Thereus R, H, R 3, P, J, H 5 — furie] furies H.

1832. 2nd the] off R.

1835. The second line of this stanza misplaced at end, H.

1841. gloire B. 1847. tenherite B.

¹ MS. J. leaf 10 verso.

She was a
daughter of
Agenor.

And she was douhter to the myhti kyng 1856
Callid Agenor, by lyneal discent,
Whos myhti kyngdam & roial fair duellyng
Was in Phenice toward the orient;
And to Arabie his land was adjacent, 1860
Ferre* be south, as ye may reede and see,
Toward the parties of the Rede Se.

Jupiter took
her by force
from her
father,

But Iubiter, whan he dede aduerte 1864
Off Europa the gret[e] semlynesse,
Hym thouhte he was woundid thoruh the herte
Onto the deth, beholdyng hir fairnesse,
And for his constreynt, & his mortal distresse,
Seyng she was so fair founde* in his siht, 1868
He rauesshid hire off veray force & myht.

But Agenor, hir owyn fadir deere,
Gan on this cas ful pitously compleyne,
Whan she, allas, most goodli and enteere, 1872
Was hym berafft, which doublid al his payne;
Recur was noon, thouh he dede pleyne,
Til he, remembrynge in his regalie,
Thouhte he wolde senden to espie 1876

who told his
son Cadmus
to bring her
back or him-
self never to
return home
again.

His sone Cadmus hir to recure ageyn,
For to serche hire in many a regeoun,
Wherso his labour were fructuous or in veyn. 1880
His fadir sette hym a fell condicioun,
Nat to retourne bi noon occasioun, —
And therupon maad hym to be bounde, —
Til that he hadde the kyngis douhter founde.

Cadmus set
out

He took his shippis bi gret auysynesse, [p. 25] 1884
And gan to saile be many a straunge se,
Dede his labour and his besynesse,
With many a worthi that were with hym preue;
But whan that he off resoun dede see, 1888
Ther was no mene for which that he was sent,
For tacomplisshe the fyn off his entent,

bravely
towards
Greece

With glad[e] herte, deuoid off al gruchyng, 1892
Seyng the cas froward and contraire,
Humble off [his] cheer[e] took his exilyng,

1861. Ferre be south] For be south B, For be sothe R, for to
be South P, For to be sought R 3.
1868. founde] foundyn B, founden R, H.
1871. Gan] Can R. 1873. berauft H. 1874. And recur R 3.
1877. recure] espian H. 1878. a] om. H.

- And off manhod list nat hymselff dispaire,
 But with his meyne knyhtli gan repaire
 Toward Grece, & proudli ther to londe,
 Off Appollo for to vndirstonde, 1896
- To what parti that he myhte drawe. and asked
 He praied the god to wissyn hym & reede, Apollo to
 Sum tokne shewe or sum maner lawe, tell him
 1900 where
- Onto what ile that he myhte hym speede;
 Or that he wolde graciously hym leede
 Where-as he myhte bilden a cite,
 That were accordyng for hym & his meyne. 1904
- And to Appollo he dede sacrefise,
 And^omaad to hym his oblacioun,
 The god requeryng goodli to deuise,
 To what lond or to what regeoun he and his
 1908 people should
 For his duellyng and habitacioun dwell.
- He sholde drawe, withoute mor obstacle,
 For hym and hise to make his habitacle.
- And Cadmus thus tofforn Appollo stood, 1912
 Knelyng a-mong with ful gret reuerence,
 And in the temple off Delphos stille a-bod,
 With humble attendaunce & deuout dilligence
 Meekli besekyng,* bi woord or sum* sentence, 1916
 That Appollo to hym wolde onclose,
 To what parti he sholde hymselff dispose.
- This was his answare in conclusioun,
 As the statue to hym dede expresse: 1920
 To goon and serche contrees enviroun,
 And til he fond, doon his besynesse,
 A bole that were excellyng of fairnesse,
 Which, bi precept off Appollos lawe, 1924
 Hadde neuer afforn in no yok Idrawe.
- And where that euer sekyng that he fond
 A bole stonde stille in his pasture,
 Appollo bad vpon the same lond, and, where
 1928 he found
 Where-as he sauh this sihte off auenture, him, to
 That he sholde doon his besi cure build a city,
- To bilde a cite, he and his folkis all,
 And Boecia, afftir the bole, it call. 1932

1899. &] or H. 1916. besekyng] abidyng B, R, H — sum]
 bi sum B, R, J. 1917. onclose] enclose R.
 1920. As] And R. 1926. 1st that] om. H.

- which he did, And whan that Cadmus the precept vndirstood,
 And in serchyng dede his besynesse,
 He fond a place where-as a bole stood
 Fedyng hymselff, which as bi liklynnesse 1936
 Was a place ful plesant off largesse,
 Wher-as he stynte and gan a cite reise,
 Which that poetis gretli comende & preise.
- And that his bilydyng myhte the more auaile, 1940
 Alle tho foreyns that dede a-boute hym duelle,
 Ful lik a knyht, be force and be bataile
 Out off that cuntre he dede hem expelle,
 Reisyng a cite which that dede excelle, 1944
 And as Ouide recordeth eek the same,
 Into this day off Thebes berith the name.
- Cadmus was
 a great and
 wise man And he was nat onli glorefied
 For reryng up off this grete cite, 1948
 But he was also gretli magnefied
 For his manhod and magnanymyte,
 And most comendid, yiff ye list to see,
 For the surmounytyng famous excellence 1952
 Which that he hadde in wisdom & science.
- and invented
 laws and an
 alphabet. For as myn auctour list off hym endite,
 Thoruh his noble prudent purueiance
 He tauhte figures & lettris for to write, 1956
 And made lawes off ful gret ordynance
 A-mong the Grekis, and sette gouernance
 Ther vicious liff bi vertu to restreyne;
 And who outraied was punshid with the peyne. 1960
- He married
 Hermione And off entent tencrecen his lynage,
 And his cite also to multeplie,
 He took a wiff, that was but yong off age,
 And she was callid, as bqokis specefie, 1964
 Hermione; and touchyng hir allie,
 Thouth that she were born off roial blood,
 She was also bothe inly fair and good.
- at about the
 time of the
 death of
 Joshua, And this was doon, as writith myn
 auctour, [p. 26] 1968
 Afftir the deth of worthi Iosue,
 Gothonyel beyng his successour,

1934. serchyng] sechyng H.

1941. tho] þe J, the R 3, H 5.

Hauyng the ledyng and the souereynte
Off Israel whan Thebes the cite
Was foundid first in tho daies olde
Bi kyng Cadmus, tofforn as I you tolde.

1972

Foure douhtren he hadde be his lyue,
Ful faire echon and goodli on to see;
And ther names to rehersen blyue,
Semele was eldest, and next Authonoe,
The thridde in ordre was callid Ynoe,
And Agaue was yongest off hem all,
Off which[e] douhtres thus [it] is be-fall:

1976

and had four
daughters,

Thei were echon off port & off maneer
Ful weel fauoured in euery manys siht,
Riht womanli and heuenli of ther cheer;
And for ther beute, ther fadir anoon riht,
As it was sitting, with al his ful[le] myht,
Lik ther estatis, ther berthe & eek ther age,
Maad hem be weddid & ioyned in mariage

1980

who were
very beautiful

To worthi pryncis, his lynage to auauce.
And thei encreced bi procreacioun,
Wheroff the kyng hadde ful gret plesaunce
And gret reioishyng in his opynyoun
To seen his lyne bi generacioun,
With his newewes & cosyns off allie,
Fro day to day so wexe and multeplie.

1984

1988

and became
the wives of
worthy
princes.

And this encreced his felicitye,
Whan he considred verrali in deede
The riche bilydyng off his roial cite,
And how Fortune dede his bridil leede
To gret richesse, in bookis as I reede,
To gret noblesse, hauyng residence
In his cite off most magnyficence.

1992

1996

Cadmus
prospered.

His douhter Semele, record off myn auctour,
Thouh she descendid were off the blood roiall,
To Iubiter she was paramour,
And bi his power aboue celestiall,
She conceyued in especiall,
As poetis list off hire tendite,
Hym that is god off grapis rede & white,

2000

2004

His daughter
Semele had
a son,
Bacchus, by
Jupiter,

2008

1971. 2nd the] *om.* R. 1973. foundid] *founden* R.1981. it] *om.* R.2000. *the t in gret stuck in scribe's pen* H.

Callid Bachus, which hath the gouernaunce
Off wynis alle and the regalie.
Wheroff afftir ther fill ful gret vengauce: 2012

[For] whan Iuno dede first espie
Off Iubiter the grete auoutrie,
Off gret hatrede and envious desir,
She made Semeles be brent with sodeyn fir, 2016

but Iuno in
her anger
caused Semele
to be burnt
up together
with her
palace.

Bi descendyng off a sodeyn leuene,
Wherthoruh hir paleis was into asshes brent —
The vnwar strook cam down fro [the] heuene,
And on Semeles the vengauce is down went; 2020
And or the flawme consumed was & spent,
Ther was off hir lefft no remembraunce,
But off hir eende the woful mortal chaunce.

Actæon, son
of Autonoe
and Aristæus,
was deuoured
by hounds.

¶ Eek Antheon, sone off Authonoe, 2024
To gret[e] myscheeff and infortune born,
Whos fadir was callid Eristee,
Come off the kynrede that I you tolde afforn;
With cruel houndis, allas, he was to-torn, 2028
For that he sauh, as bookis off hym tell,
Diane nakid bathe hire in a well.

Agave, the
youngest
sister,

And as poetis remembryn atte leste,
Whan the ladies off Thebes the cite 2032
Heeld off Bachus solempneli the feste,
The yongest suster, callid Agaue,
Douhter to Cadmus, — allas, it was pite! —
Ageyn Pantheus, hir* owyn sone deere, 2036
She wex so wood & mortal off hir cheere,

murdered her
son Pentheus
because he
laughed at
the women
of Thebes
when they
sacrificed to
Bacchus.

Moordryng hym in ful cruel wise,
In hir rage she was so furious:
For he louh[e] at the sacrefise 2040
In Thebes doon bi women to Bachus;
The which[e] sone was callid Pantheus,
Whom that she slouh with a ful sharp[e] dart,
In hir woodnesse, as she hym fond a-part. 2044

Thus Cadmus
fell into
great trouble.

These grete myscheuys fellyn in the lyne
Off kyng Cadmus thoruh his onhappi chaunce;
Fortune his noblesse gan to vndirmyne,

2010. hath the] that hath R.

2013. For] *om.* H, R. 2018, 19] *om.* J.

2019. 2nd the] *om.* H, R. P. 2030. in] at H.

2036. hir] his B, R — Pantheus] *om.* J.

And thouhte she wolde his glory disauaunce. 2048 Fortune, the
Al worldli gladnesse is medlid with greuaunce, false
Experience in Cadmus ye may see, enchantress,
So importable was his aduersite. undermined
his prosperity.

For whil he sat most hiest in his glory, [p. 27] 2052
No parti clipped off his prosperite,
His briht renoun and his roial memory
In rewmis sprad and many ferr cuntre,
And he most welful in his kynгли see 2056
Sat with his lynage, most hih in his noblesse,
Than cam Fortune, the fals enchaunteresse,

Off wilfulnesse, and fond occasioun
A-geyn this Cadmus, & maad his renoun dulle, 2060
And off his kynrede, bi fals collusioun,
She gan a-wey the brihtest fethres pulle;
And whan his shynyng was wexe up to the fulle,
Afftir the chaung off Fortunys lawe, 2064
His glory gan discrecen and withdrawe.

It was mor greuous to his dignite,
A sodeyn fall from his hih noblesse,
Than yiff that he neuer hadde be 2068
Set in thestat off [so] gret worthynesse;
For the furious mortal heuynesse
Off his kynreede, withoutyn any more,
Wolde haue greued a poore man ful sore. 2072

And a-mong his sorwes euerichon,
To reherse pleyntli as it was,
I dar afferme how that there was oon,
Most horrible & dreedful in such cas; 2076
For Cadmus sone, callid Athamas,
His sone-in-lawe, thoruh fals malencolie
Fill sodenli into a frenesie.

Off whom the wiff was callid Ynoe, 2080 who thought,
Cadmus douhter, as ye han herd expresse, his wife a
Which thoruh the constreynt off his infirmite, lioness and
In his rage and furious woodnesse his sons lions,
Thouhte that his wiff was a leonesse, 2084
And in his wilde ymagynaciouns,
That his too childre were also too leouns.

2052. his glory] hiest R. 2062. brihtest] briht H.
2069. thestat] the staat J, the state P — so] om. R.
2085. wilde] wood R — ymaginacion R.

and slew his
son Learchus.

And vpon hem ful loude he gan to crie,
Toward his wiff in haste he ran anon, 2088
And from hir armys, ther was no remedie,
The child he rente, and on a craggi ston
He gan* to brose it and breke it eueri bon.
The which[e] child, Bochas writith thus, 2092
Ful tendir and yong, was callid Learchus.

Ino fled with
her other
son.

And off this woful sodeyn auenture
Off his rage, whan that [s]he took heed,
As most sorweful off any creature, 2096
Hir othir child she hente anoon for dreed;
For off socour she knew no betir speed,
So as she myhte gan haste out off his siht.
But wellaway, as she took hir to fliht, 2100

They fell
into the sea
and were
drowned.

Hir husbonde cam afftir pursuyng
Lich a wood leoun in his cruelte;
Doun from a mounteyn, which was dependyng,
She and hir child fill into the se. 2104
Was it nat routhe, was it nat pite,
A kyngis douhter, hir lord in Thebes crownyd,
He to be wood and she for feer so drownyd!

Thus the joy of
Cadmus was
tempered
with sorrow.

Loo, heer the fyn off Cadmus euerideel, 2108
His childre slayn and his allies all,
And he hymself[e] fro Fortunys wheel,
Whan he lest wende, ful sodenli is fall,
His litil sugir temprid with moch gall: 2112
For a-mong[es] all his mortal peynes,
His liege-men, off Thebes citeseynes,

Finally he
and his
wife were
exiled

Made ageyn hym a conspiracioun,
Put hym in exil and his wiff also, 2116
His sonys, his douhtris brouht to destruccioun;
And to thencrecyng off his dedli wo,
He and his wiff compellid bothe too
For verray pouert and verray indigence 2120
In ther last age to purchase ther dispence.

and died in
poverty.

Thus [of] Cadmus the sorwes to descryue
And his myscheeff to putte in remembraunce,
He banshid was twies bi his lyue, 2124

2089. hir] ther R. 2090. craggi] cragge R.
2091. He gan] Began B, R—brose] briste J, bris R 3, bruise P.
2095. she] he H, R. 2096. As] Was H. 2109. children R.
2109. all] om. R. 2120. verray] varrei R.
2122. of] om. R.

- First bi his fadris cruel ordynaunce
 Off his suster to maken enqueraunce,
 And althirlast in his vnweeldi age
 He was compellid to holden his passage 2128
 Out off Thebes, his wiff and he allone,
 In sorwe & wepyng taccomplissh up ther daies.
 Into Illirie to-gidre thei be gone,
 Ther pacience put at fell assaies, 2132
 Whos bittirnesse felte noon allaies.
 Eek off ther eende nor ther vnhappi fate,
 Nor off ther deth I fynde noon other date,
 Sauff that Ouide maketh menciouⁿ, [p. 28] 2136
 And Iohn Bochas the poete excellent
 Seith that the* brethre, Zeto & Amphioun,
 Out off Thebes, bothe bi oon assent,
 Haue* this Cadmus into exil sent, 2140
 His wiff also, afftir ther hih noblesse,
 To eende her liff in sorwe and wrechidnesse.
 But the goddis, off merci and pite,
 Whan thei hem sauh bi Fortune so cast doun 2144
 From ther estatis into pouerte,
 Hauyng off hem ful gret compassioun,
 Thei made a-noon a transformacioun
 Off bothe tweyne, hem yeuyng the liknesse 2148
 Off serpentis, to lyue in wildirnesse.

¶ Lenvoye.

- O** WHAT estat may hymself assure
 For to conserue his liff in sekirnesse?
 What worldli ioie may heer long endure, 2152
 Or wher shal men now fynde stabilnesse,
 Sithe kyngis, pryncis from ther hih noblesse —
 Record off Cadmus — been sodenli brouht lowe
 And from the wheel off Fortune ouerthrowe? 2156
 Who may susteene the pitous auenture
 Off this tragedie be writyng to expresse?
 Is it nat lik onto the chaunteplure,
 Gynnyng with ioie, eendyng in wrechidnesse? — 2160
 Al worldli blisse is meynt with bittirnesse,

What estate
 may live in
 security?

All worldly
 happiness is
 mingled with
 sorrow,

2126. Inqueraunce H.

2138. the] thee B, thre H, R, two P.

2140. Haue] Hath B, han H, J. 2143. and] & off R.

The sodeyn chaung no man theroff may knowe;
For who sit hiest is sonest ouerthrowe.

therefore, O
Lords, be-
ware the
fate of those
whom
Fortune cast
from her
wheel.

Was in this world yit neuer creature, 2164
Rekne up pryncis, for al ther hih noblesse
Fortune koude recleyme hem to hir lure
And emporisshe thoruh hir frowardnesse.
Wherefore, ye Lordis, for* al your gret richesse, 2168
Beth war afforn or ye daunce on the rowe
Off such as Fortune hath from hir wheel throwe.

[A processe of Oetes kyng of Colchos, Iason, Medee,
Theseus, Scilla Nisus, and other moo.]¹

WHAN Iohn Bochas was most dilligent
To considere the successiouns 2172
Off lynages, with all his hool entent,
In his writyng and descripciouns
To compile the generaciouns
Of many noble, famous off estat — 2176
I meene off such as were infortunat, —

Æetes, king
of Colchos,

In his serchyng he fond nat a fewe
That were vnhappi founde in ther lyuyng;
To his presence a-noon ther gan hem* shewe 2180
A multitude ful pitousli wepyng,
A-mongis which, ful doolfully pleynyng,
Cam first Oetes, and hath his compleynt gunne,
Kyng off Colchos and sone onto the sunne. 2184

son of Apollo,

For off Phebus, which is so briht & cleer,
Poetis write that he was sone and heir,
Because he was so myhti off poweer,
So fressh, so lusti, so manli [and] so feir; 2188
But off Fortune he fill in gret dispeir,
Cursyng his fate and his destyne,
Whan Iason first entrid his cuntre,

Be Pelleus sent fro Thesalie, 2192
Ther for taccomplisshe be dilligent labour
The grete emprises thoruh his cheualrie,

2166. recleyme] recline R. 2168. for] with B, R, J, H 5.

2170. as Fortune] fortune as R — as] om. J — throwe] ouer-
prowe J, H 5. 2180. hem] hym B, R, H 5, him J, them P.

2183. compleynt] playnte R.

2188. lusti manli and riȝt faier J, H 5 — and] om. H, R, R 3.

2191. Iason] Iosan R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 12 recto.

Yiff God and Fortune list doon to hym fauour,
 That he myhte wynnē the tresour: 2196
 This is to meene, that he were so bold
 The ram tassaile which bar the Flees of Gold.

This said Iason thoruh* counseil off Mede,
 Bi sorcery and incantacioun 2200
 The boolis slouh, horrible for to see,
 And venquysshid the venymous dragoun,
 The kyng despoilid off his possessioun,
 Accomplisshid with carectis & figures 2204
 Off Colchos the dreedful auentures.

And afftirward, whan he his purpos hadde,
 He lefte Oetes in ful gret dispair,
 And Medea foorth with hym he ladde 2208
 And hir brother, which was the kyngis hair.
 But as I fynde, how in his repair,
 Out off Colchos whan thei gan remue,
 Kyng Oetes afftir hem gan sue. 2212

Vpon Iason auenged for to be,
 Withoute tarieng, he folwid hem proudly;
 The which[e] thyng whan Iason dede see,
 This Medea gan shape a remedy: 2216
 She took hir brothir & slouh hym cruely,
 And hym dismembrid, as bookis make mynde,
 And pecemeel in a feeld behynde

She gan hym caste, al bespreynt with
 blood. [p. 29] 2220

Wheroff his fader whan he hadde a siht,
 Ful pale off cheer, stille in the feeld he stood,
 Whil she and Iason took hem onto fliht —
 I trowe that tyme the moste woful wiht 2224
 That was a-lyue, whan he dede knowe
 His child dismembrid and a brood Isowe!

Which cause was, alas and wellaway!
 That he so stynte, as man disconsolat, 2228
 Whil that Iason fro Colchos went a-way.
 And Medea, most infortunat,
 Was ground and roote off this mortal debat:

2195. to] *om.* R. 2197. is] *om.* R.

2199. This] The H — saide] *om.* J, H 5 — thoruh] thoruh
 the B, H, R, R 3.

2204. carectis] carecters R3, charactes P.

was despoiled
 of the Golden
 Fleece by
 Jason,

who led
 away his
 daughter
 Medea.

Medea slew
 her brother

to stay her
 father's
 pursuit.

For who sauh euer or radde off such a-nothir, 2232
To saue a straunger list to slen hir brothir?

Her love of
Jason was
the cause of
it all.

Forsook hir fader, hir contre & kynreede,
The lond enporished thoruh hir robberie;
Off hir worshep she took noon othir heed, 2236
Loue had hir brouht in such a fantasie.

And whil that she a-bood in Thesalie
And with Iason dede ther soiourne,
She made Eson to youthe to retourne. 2240

Afterwards
Medea re-
stored Eson
to youth

A yerde she took, that was drie and old,
And in hir herbis and commixciouns*
She made it boile, in Ouide it is told,
And bi carectis and incantaciouns, 2244
And with the crafft off hir coniurisouns
The yerde be-gan [to] budde & blosme newe
And to bere frut and leuys fresh off hewe.

And semblabli with hir confecciouns 2248
His olde humours she hath depurid cleene,
And with hir lusti fresh[e] pocious
His empti skyn, tremblyng & riht leene,
Pale and wan, that no blood was seene, 2252
But as it were a dedli creature —
Al this hath she transformyd bi nature.

Made hym lusti and fressh off his corage,
Glad off herte, liffli off cheer and siht, 2256
Riht weel hewed and cleer off his visage,
Wonder delyuer bothe off force & myht,
In all his membris as weeldi & as lyht
As euer he was, and in the same estat, 2260
Bi crafft off Mede he was so alterat.

and caused
the death of
Pelias, Jason's
uncle,

Afttir al this, a-geyn kyng Pelleus
She gan maligne, vnclie onto Iason;
And off envie she procedith thus: 2264
The kyngis douhtren* she drow to hir anoon,
Hem counsailid that thei sholde goon
Onto ther fadir & pleyntli to hym seyn,
Yiff he desirid to be yong a-geyn. 2268

2234. 2nd hir] *om.* H. 2238. that] *om.* R.

2242. in] wip J — in commixciouns the 2nd c is formed like t in
B, H, J. 2244. carectis] charactes P. 2246. to] *om.* R, H.

2249. humours] humorus R. 2250. hir] his H.

2265. douhtren] douhter B, douhtir R, douhtren H, daughters
P, R 3, H 5 — drow] drawip J.

Ful restored his force to recure
 And therewithal in lusti age floure,
 She behihte to doon hir besi cure
 Lik his desir to helpyn and socoure,
 And in this mateer so crafft[i]lli laboure,
 Fynali stonde in the same caas
 To be maad yong, lik as his brothir was.
 Touchyng which thyng, for mor euydence
 This Medea hath to the douhtren told,
 Off entent to yeue the mor credence,
 She bad hem take a ram that wer riht old,
 And with a knyff for to be so bold
 To steen this beeste afforn hem ther he stood,
 And in a vessel drawe out his olde blood,
 Fulli affermyng lik as it wer trewe,
 That he sholde been a lamb a-geyn.
 For she be crafft wolde his blood renewe
 In such wise be euidence pleyne
 That off elde no tokne shal be seyn —
 In al his membris as lusti and enter
 As was a lamb euyd off o yeer.
 And therupon in ful sleihti wise
 She gan a processe off ful fals tresoun,
 The sustre made vpon this ram practise,
 Drouh out his blood lik her entencioun;
 And she bi crafft off fals illusioun
 Blent her eyen bi apperence in veyn
 The olde ram to seeme a lamb a-geyn.
 Thus Medea be sleihte compassyng,
 Off envie and venymous hatreede,
 Excitid hath the sustre in werkyng,
 A-geyn ther fadir mortali to proceede.
 With sharp[e] knyuis thei made her fader bleede,
 Mid the herte thoruhout euery veyne,
 Supposyng, the celi sustren tweyne,
 That Pelleus renewed sholde be [p. 30]
 To youthe a-geyn off force & off substaunce.
 But fynali bi tresoun off Mede

by promising
 his daughters
 to make him
 young like
 his brother,

persuading
 them

to kill their
 father.

2272. his] hir H. 2275. his] hir H. 2285. For] & H.

2289. euyd] yewide R 3, yened P, eyned J, H 5.

2299. sustre] sustren H, sustres H 5, susters P.

2300. to] om. H, R 3. 2305. youht geyn R.

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He lost* his liffe, such was his woful chaunce;
 For she it wrouhte onli off vengauce, 2308
 As roote & ground off this cruel deede,
 A-geyn the* nature off al* womanheede.

Medea
 thought this
 would please
 Jason, but
 it did not.

Supposyng in hir opynyoun,
 How that the deth gretli sholde plesse 2312
 Off Pelleus onto hir lord Iasoun,
 Thoruh gret encres sette his herte at ese;
 But it rebounded into his disese,
 That fynali Iason hir forsook 2316
 For hir offence, and he his weye took

He left her
 and went to
 Corinth,
 where he
 married
 Creusa,
 whom Medea
 burnt up
 in revenge.

Into Corynthe, toward the kyng Creon,
 Whos douhter Creusa, for hir gret beute, 2320
 Was afftirward iweddidd to Iason.
 But whan this weddyng was knowe to Mede,
 Caste she wolde theron auengid be,
 Gan to conspire off malis and envie,
 And thoruh hir magik and [hir] sorcerie, 2324

In ful gret haste gan [for] to ordeyne
 A litil coffre, onli off entent;
 And bi hir yonge faire sonys tweyne,
 With othre iewelis, she hath the coffre sent, 2328
 Onto Creusa makyng a present,
 Which off malis she list so dispose,
 That whan Creusa the coffre dede onclose,

The fir brast out a ful large space, 2332
 Brent Creusa bi ful gret violence,
 Set a-fire pleynli al the place
 Benchauntement; ther* was no resistence —
 Al wente affire that was in hir presence, 2336
 Bi vengance dede ful gret damage.
 But whan Iason the fir sauh in his rage,

Jason wanted
 to punish
 her,

And considred the malis off Mede,
 Thouhte he wolde doon execucioun 2340
 For to punshe the gret inquite
 A-geyn[e]s hym compassid off tresoun;
 For she off vengance, a-geyn[es] al resoun,

2307. lost] lefte B, R. 2309. &] off R.
 2310. the] *om.* B — al] al good B, R.
 2312. that] at R. 2314. encres] encres R — at] in R.
 2322. theron] *om.* R. 2324. hir] *om.* R, H.
 2325. for] *om.* J, R. 2335. ther] pleynli ther B, R.

Afftir that Creusa consumed was & brent, 2344
Hir owne sonys, which she hadde sent,

Withoute routhe or womanli pite,
She falsli moordred — the childre that she bar — especially as
Lik a stepmooder auenged for to be, 2348 her two sons
Cutte ther throtis or that thei wer war, out of hatred
A-geyn nature, ther was noon othir spaar, to him.

But for hatreede she hadde onto Iason.
Afftir this moordre she fledde hir way a-noon, 2352

So escapyng his indignacioun.
Be crafft off magik she wente at liberte But she es-
To Athenys, and in that regioun caped to
She-weddid was onto the kyng Egee. Athens,
Nat longe afftir bi hym a sone had she, married
The which[e] child, myn auctour tellith thus, Ægeus
Afftir Medea callid was Medus. 2356

Afftir whos name the famous regioun 2360
I-named was, which is callid Meede.

But folwyng ay hir olde condicioun,
This Medea, void off shame & dreede, and tried to
Compassid hath off wilful fals*hatreede, poison her
That Theseus, the sone off kyng Egee, stepson
With newe poisoun shal deuoured be. Theseus, who
2364 escaped.

But Theseus, ful lik a manli knyht,
In repayryng hom to his contre, 2368
Off hih prudence espied a-noon ryht
The mortal vengeance, the gret[e] cruelte
Off his stepmooder, which off enmite
Concludid* hath in hir entencioun 2372
Hym to destroie onwarli with poisoun.

Hir herte off malis, cruel & horrible,
As she that was with tresoun euer allied,
Whan that she sauh hir purpos most odible 2376 She then
Be kyng Egeus fulli was espied, went back
She hath hir herte & wittis newe applied, to Jason.
As in ther bookis poetis han compiled,
A-geyn to Iason to be reconsiled. 2380

She fledde away for dred off Theseus,
List he hadde doon on hir vengauunce,
And fynali, as writ Ouidius,

2352. hir way] away H. 2361. callid is J, called is P.

2372. Concludid] Concludyng B, R.

And moral Senec concludith in substaunce, 2384
 In his tragedies making remembrance,
 How Medea, lik as poetis seyn,
 Onto Iason restored was a-geyn.

Poets do not
 tell how it
 was that
 they were
 reconciled.

Touchyng the eende off ther furious
 discord, [p. 31] 2388

It must
 have been
 through
 sorcery.

Poetis make theroff no mencion
 Nor telle no mene how thei fill at accord,
 But yiff it were bi incantacioun,
 Which so weel koude turne up-so-doun 2392
 Sundry thyngis off loue & off hatreede.
 And in Bochas off hir no mor I reede,

Sauff whan she hadde fulfillid hir purpos,
 Myn auctour tellith, that Iason & Mede 2396
 Resorted han a-geyn onto Colchos
 Hir fadir Oetes, & from his pouerte
 Brouht hym a-geyn into his roial see,
 And to his crowne bi force thei hym restore: 2400
 Touchyng his eende, off hym I fynde* no more.

At any rate,
 they restored
 Oetes to his
 throne.

Thus his fortune hath turnyd to and fro,
 First lik a kyng hauyng ful gret richesse,
 Affir lyuyng in pouert and in wo, 2404
 Sithen restorid to his worthynesse:
 Thus ay is sorwe medlid with gladnesse,
 Who can aduerte, in al worldli thyng,
 Record off Mynos, the noble worthi kyng. 2408

Now I shall
 turn to
 Minos, son
 of Jupiter
 and Europa.

TO whom I muste now my stile dresse,
 Folwen the trais off Bochacius,
 The which[e] Mynos, as Ouide doth expresse,
 Touchyng his birthe writ[eth] pley[n]li thus, 2412
 That he was manli, wis and vertuous,
 Sone bi discent off Iubiter the grete,
 And off Europa born to been heir in Crete.

Off his persone wonder delectable, 2416
 Ful renommed off wisdam and science,
 Bi dyuers titles off laude comendable
 Off birthe, off blood, off knyghthod & prudence;
 For bi his study and enter dilligence 2420
 He fond first lawes groundid on resoun,
 Werbi off Crete the grete regioun

He was king
 of Crete and

2390. at] om. R. 2401. I fynde] fynde I B, R, J.
 2412. writeth] writ R. 2419. &] of H.

- Gouernyd was and set in stabilnesse.
 Alle iniuries and wrongis to refourme, 2424 governed his subjects well.
 Made statutis extorsious to repressse,
 Off rihtwisnesse thei took ther firste fourme,
 And that ech man sholde hymself confourme
 Lik ther degrees, subiect and souerayne, 2428
 That no man hadde no mater to complayne.
- He made his liges to lyuen in quieete,
 Cleer shynyng in his roial noblesse,
 With suerd and sceptre sittyng in his seete; 2432 His wife's name was Pasiphae,
 And whil he floured in his worthynesse
 He took a wiff off excellent fairnesse,
 Doughter to Phebus, in Bochas ye may see,
 And she was callid faire Pasiphe. 2436
- And hir fadir, bi record off writyng,
 In his tyme was holden ful famous;
 Off thile off Rodis he was crownyd kyng,
 And in his daies off port ful glorious, 2440
 Riht proud in armis and victorious,
 Takyng witnesse Methamorphoseos. by whom he had three children.
 His douhter hadde thre childre be Mynos,
- The firste a sone callid Androgee, 2444
 And afftirward ful faire douhtren tweyne,
 Riht womanli and goodli on to see;
 But, as Fortune for hem dede ordeyne,
 Thei felte her lyue gret trouble & [gret] payne — 2448
 Callid Adriana, and Phedra was the tothir,
 Folwyng ther fate, it myhte be noon othir.
- Androgeus bi kyng Mynos was sent,
 For he sholde profityn in clergie, 2452
 To Athenys off vertuous entent
 There to studien in philosophie;
 And for he gan tencrece & multeplie
 And passe all othir bi studi in lernyng 2456 Their son Androgeus was maliciously slain in Athens,
 And to excelle his felawes in cunnyng,
- Thei off envie and fals malis, allas,
 Made a-geyn hym a conspiracioun,
 And from a pynacle sacrid to Pallas, 2460

2425. repressse] oppresse R. 2439. thile] the yile R.
 2441. riht victorious H. 2445. douhtre R.
 2448. 2nd gret] om. R. 2449. that othir R.
 2450. ther] the H. 2452. sholde] wold R.

Off ful gret heihte, made hym tumble doun.
 For which iniurie, Bochas maketh mencioun,
 His fadir Mynos auengid for to be,
 Leide a gret power a-boute the cite. 2464

for which
 Minos took
 revenge.

He caste hym fulli that no man sholde hym lette,
 But that he wolde doon crueli vengauce;
 And round a-boute so sore he hem besette
 With men off armys & with his ordynaunce, 2468
 That fynali he brouht hem to vttraunce,
 And them constreynyd, withynne a litil space,
 Ther liff, ther deth submyttyng to his grace.

Nisus, king
 of Megara,
 helped the
 Athenians,

But whil thei made ageyn hym resistence, [p. 32] 2472
 Supposyng his power to withstonde,
 Nisus, that was kyng off Megarence,
 A-geyn Mynos ther parti took on honde:
 And offte tymes, as ye shal vndirstonde, 2476
 Whan kyng Mynos the cite dede assaile,
 Nisus withynne, with myhti appaile

but his
 daughter
 Scylla fell
 in love with
 Minos

Vpon the wal stood in his diffence —
 Whan that Mynos, ful lik a manli knyht, 2480
 Fauht withoute with sturdi violence,
 Lich Mars hymself in steel armyd briht.
 Wheroff whan Scilla onys hadde a siht,
 Douhtir to Nisus, aduerting his prowesse, 2484
 A-noon for loue she fill in gret distresse.

She was supprised with his hih noblesse;
 His manli force, expert many-fold,
 Set[te] Scilla in gret heuynesse: 2488
 For loue off Mynos, off poetis it is told,
 Made hir herte presumen and be bold,
 First hir-silff to putte in iupartie,
 Hir fadris liff, the cite, the clergie. 2492

and conspired
 her father's
 death,

From hir herte loue hath set a-side,
 A-geyn nature, hir blood & hir kynreede;
 And al frenshiþe from hire she gan deuyde,
 And off hir worship took no maner heede: 2496
 Loue maad hir cruel, a-geyn al womanheede,
 First hir herte so sore sette affire,
 Hir fadres deth falsli to conspire.

2469. vttraunce] variaunce R. 2471. Ther] The H.
 2474. Magarence H. 2489. 2nd off] in H.
 2491. iupartie] parti R.

- For kyng Mynos beyng a straunger
 Was so enprentid in hir opynyoun,
 Off creatures ther stood noon so neer;
 And for his sake, bi ful fals tresoun,
 She compassid the destruccioun
 First off hir fadir and off the cite —
 So straunge a thyng, alas, how myhte it be,
 That a woman off yeris yong and tendre
 Koude ymagyne so merueilous a thyng!
 But offte it fallith, that creatures sclendre,
 Vnder a face off angelik lokyng,
 Been verrai wolues outward in werkyng.
 Eek vnder colour off ther port femynyne,
 Summe be founde verray serpentyne,
 Lambis in shewyng, shadwid with meeknesse,
 Cruel as tigres, who doth to hem offence,
 Off humble cheer pretending a liknesse.
 But, o alas! what harm doth apparence,
 What damage doth countirfet innocence,
 Vndir a mantil shrowdid off womanheed,
 Whan feyned falsnesse doth ther bridil leed!
 For this Scilla, the kyngis douhter deere,
 In whom he sette hool his affeccioun,
 His hertis ioie, his plesaunce most enteere,
 His worldli blisse, his consolacioun, —
 But she al turned to his confusioun,
 Nat lich a douhter, but lik a sorceresse
 His deth compassid, the story berth witnesse.
 Hir fadir hadde a fatal her that shon
 Brihtere than gold, in which he dede assure
 Manli to fihte* a-geyn his mortal fon;
 For on his hed[e] whil it dede endure,
 He sholde venquysshe bi manhod, & recure,
 And thoruh his knyhtod, to his ences off glory,
 In euery quarell wynnen the victory.
 But whil hir fadir kyng Nisus lay & sleep,
 Vpon a nyht, parcel affor day,
 Ful secreli, or that he took keep,
 The her off gold this Scilla kit away;
 And onto Mynos, armyd wher he lay,

2500 a strange
thing for a
young
woman to
do,

2504

2508 (but often
the most
angelic ap-
pearing
creatures

2512

are as cruel
as tigers).

2516

2520

Like a
sorceress

2524

2528

2532

2536 she cut
away the
fatal hair
of gold from
Nisus' head,

2530. fihte] fihten B.

2538. kit] did H.

She it presentid thoruh hir ordynaunce, 2540
Off fals entent hym for to do plesaunce.

and, as Ovid
tells, took a
sharp knife
and killed
him.

But in this mateer, lik as writ Ouide,
Methamorphoseos, who-so taketh heed,
Hir fadir slepyng, she knelyng bi his side, 2544
Took a sharp knyff withoute feer or dreed,
Whil he lay nakid, she karff a-too his hed,
Stal hir way[e] off ful fals entent,
And to kyng Mynos the hed she doth present. 2548

She presented
her father's
head to
Minos

And in hir comyng onto his presence,
Hir fadris hed whan she afforn hym laide,
No-thing a-shamed off hir gret offence,
Onto Mynos thus she dede abraide, 2552
And with bold cheer[e] euene thus she saide:
"Mi lord," quod she, "with support off your grace,
Yeueth to my tale leiser tyme and space;

and declared
that her
love for him
had

Certis, my lord, loue hath excitid me [p. 33] 2556
And constreynynd to this cruel deede,
To slen my fader, destroien my cite,
Forgete my worshep, forsaken womanheede,
And maad me hardi to make my fader bleede — 2560
Thynges horrible thus I haue vndertake
For tacomplisshe onli for your sake.

constrained
her to do
this horrible
deed.

Mi-silff disheritid for loue off your persone,
Callid in my contre a fals traitouresse, 2564
Disconsolat stole a-wey a-lone,
Off newe diffamed, named a maistresse
Off fals moordre, I brynge a gret wisesse,
Mi fadres hed and his dedli visage, 2568
A-geyn nature to forthren your viage.

"Wherefore,
I pray, consider,
like a gentle
knight,

Wherefore, I praie that ye list aduertise,
And considreth lich a gentil knyht
How I, for loue toward your gret emprise, 2572
And to gret fortheryng also off your ryht,
Haue first my fader depryued off his myht,
Rafft hym his liff, dispoiled his richesse
To do plesaunce to your hih noblesse. 2576

and accept
my love.

And no-thing axe onto my guerdoun
Nor to my reward that myhte me auaille,
But that I myhte haue ful possessioun

Off your persone, most worthi in bataile; 2580
 For ther is no tresor that myhte countiruaile
 To my desir, as that ye wolde in deede
 Goodli accepte me and my maidenheede.

Ye may me saue & spille with a woord, 2584 "I have left
 Make most glad and most dolerous; all behind
 I nat requere off you, my souereyn lord, for your
 But that ye wolde be to me gracious: sake."

For blood and kyn, and my fadres hous 2588
 Al lefft behynde, yiff ye list aduerte,
 And vndepartid youe to you myn herte.

Which to your hihnesse auhte inouh suffise,
 All thyng consided, in your roial estat, 2592
 Conceyued also in how vnkouth wise
 For your loue I stonde desolat,
 Sauff off your mercy fulli disconsolat.
 Heere is al and sum, your loue I beie to sore, 2596
 But ye do grace; I can sey you no more."

And whan she hadde hir tale told knelyng, Minos was
 With a maner pretense off wemanheed, horrified.
 Off al hir tresoun a poynt nat concelyng, 2600
 The kyng astonyd off hir horrible deed,
 Bi gret auys peised and took heed,
 It was not sitting to prynce nor to no kyng
 To do fauour to so froward a thyng. 2604

With troublid herte and with a face pale,
 His look vpcast, [he] seide, "God forbeede,
 That euer in cronycle, in story or in tale,
 That any man sholde off Mynos reede, 2608
 How he supported so venymous a deede —
 Fauoure a woman, allas and wellaway!
 Which slouh hir fader whan he a-bedde lay.

But for your hatful and vnkyndli rage, 2612 "May the
 I pray the goddis echon and Saturne gods take
 To take vengeance on your fals outrage: vengeance
 For euery-wher, wher ye do returne, on you!
 And eueri place wher-as ye soiourne, 2616

2585. dolorous H.
 2589. Al] And R.
 2593. Conceyued] And conceyve H.
 2603. no] om. H.
 2606. he] om. R, J, P, H 5.
 2608. That] Tat R.

- Lond and se, shortli to expresse,
Thei been infect with your cursidnesse.
- “Begone from
my court!” Your owne mouth your outrage doth accuse;
And your accus is so abhomyable, 2620
That your giffis I fulli do refuse, —
Thei be so froward and repreuable.
And your persone, disnaturel & vnstable,
Withynne my court, it were a thyng nat fayr, 2624
That ye sholde a-bide or haue repair.
- “May Tellus
and Neptune
refuse you
an abiding-
place!” Ye be so hatful vpon eueri side
And contrarious off condicioun,
I praie Tellus, which off the erthe is guide, 2628
And to Neptunus I make this orisoun:
As ferr as strecchith ther domynacioun
Vnder the boundis off ther regalie,
A duellyng-place that thei to you denyel!” 2632
- Whan Mynos hadde his answer thus deuised,
On resoun groundid and on equite,
And Scilla sauh how she was despised, 2636
Knew no parti, passage nor contre
To fynde socour whedir she myhte fle,
But disespeired as a traitouresse,
Toward the se a-noon she gan hir dresse
- The gods
turned
Scylla into
a quail
and her
father into
a sparrow-
hawk. That
was their
end. Tentre the water pleyntli yiff she myhte, [p. 34] 2640
For verrai shame hirseluē for to shrowde;
And whan the goddis theroff hadde a syhte,
Thei turned hire, as thei that myhte & kowde, 2644
In-ta quaile for to synge lowde.
Hir fader Nisus thei dede also transmue
In ta sperhawk, the quaile to pursue.
- This was the eende off Nisus & off Scille.
And afftirward off Athenes the toun 2648
Was yolden vp to stondeñ at the wille
Off kyng Mynos, withoute condicioun;
Euery thre yeer bi reuolucioun
Thei off the cite sholde nat dellaie 2652
Nyne off ther childre for a tribut paie.

2640. *The second band begins here R.*

2643. that] *om.* R.

2645. transmue] *remewe* R.

2646. sperhawk] *sparow* R, *sparhawke* H.

2647. 2nd off] *om.* R.

2651. thre] *om.* R.

- This was bi Mynos thymposicioun
 Vpon Athenys; and off verrai dreed
 Thei obeied, as maad is mencioun,
 And ther childre yeer bi yeer thei leed
 Into Crete the Mynotaur to feed,
 Onto this monstre ordeyned for repast,
 Which at ther comyng deuoured wer in hast. 2656
- But or that I ferthere do proceede
 In this mater, I will do my cure
 To declare, yiff ye list take heede,
 Off this monstre to telle the engendrure,* 2664
 Vnkouth to heere and a-geyn nature;
 For bi the writyng off Ouidius,
 This ougli beeste was engendrid thus,
- Methamorphoseos, the maner ye may see:
 Mynos hadde a bole off gret fairnesse,
 Whit as mylk; and the queen Pasiphe
 Loued hym so hote, the story berth witnesse,
 And Dedalus dede his besynesse 2668
 [Bi sotil craft, & made his gynys so,
 That ayenst kynde with hir he had to do,
- And conceyued a beest[e] monstrous,
 That was departid, halfe bole, half man; 2676
 And as the poete bi wrytyng techith vs,
 Off Mynotaurus thus the name began.
 And Dedalus, not long aftir whan]
 That this monstre was bi the queen forth
 brouht, 2680
 This subtil werkman hath an hous Iwrouht
- Callid Laboryntus,* dyuers and vnkouth,
 Ful off wrynkles and off straungenesse,
 Ougli to knowe which is north or* south, 2684
 Or to what part a man sholde hym dresse;
 Folk were ther blent with furious derknesse,
 Who that entred, his retourn was in veyn,
 Withoute a clue for to resorte a-geyn. 2688

Minos,
victorious
over the
Athenians,
compelled
them to
send 9 chil-
dren every
3 years to
the Minotaur.

The Minotaur
was the off-
spring of
Pasiphae and
a white bull.

The bull
lived in
the Labyrinth
made by
Daedalus,

2654. bi] of H, R 3. 2657. children R.
 2658. Mynatour R. 2659. this] the R. 2662. will] wold R.
 2664. telle the engendrure] tellen the engendrure B, H.
 2670. Posiphee R. 2673-9 are supplied from R, om. in B, H.
 2676. halfe a bull P.* 2677. bi] om. P.
 2678. Mynataurus J, Mynotouris H. 2682. Laboryntus B.
 2684. or] & B.

a place like
a prison,
where it
devoured
human flesh.

Off Mynotaurus this was the habitacle,
Lik a prisoun maad for tormentrie,
For dampnyd folk a peynful tabernacle;
For all that lay ther in iupartie,
The monstre muste deuoure hem & defie:
And speciali was ordeyned this torment
For all that wern doun from Athenys sent.

2692

Some books,
however, say
that Pasiphae
had a child by

But in this mater summe bookis varie,
And afferme how queen Pasiphe
Off kyng Mynos loued a secretarie
Callid Taurus, in Bochas ye may see;
And thus the kyng, for al his rialte,
Deceyued was, for who may any while
Hymself preserue wher women list begile?

2696

Taurus, a
secretary, —
which would
explain the
matter of
the bull.

For bi this Taurus, Bochas berth witnesse,
Queen Pasiphe hadde a child ful fair,
Mynos nat knowyng bi no liklynesse
But that the child was born to been his hair.
His trust was good, he fill in no dispair;
For some husbondis, as poetis han compiled,
Which most assure [hem] rathest been begiled.

2700

2704

2708

Wives are a
bad lot, but
we do not
discard a
falcon for
one fault.

Innocentis can nat deeme a-mysse,
Namli off wyues that be founde trewe;
Clerkis may write, but doutlès thus it isse,
Off ther nature thei loue no thynges newe:
Stedfast off herte, thei chaunge nat her hewe;
Hawkes best preued, sumwhile a chek can make,
Yit for o faute the foul is nat forsake.

2712

2716

To return to
the Athenians,
they paid
their tribute;

Off these materes write I will no more.
But ay the tribut & seruage off the toun
Procedith foorth, thei constreyned wer so sore,
Lich as ther lott turned up and doun;
For ther was maad[e] nōn excepcioun
Off hih nor louh, nothir for sour nor swete,
But as it fill, thei were sent into Crete.

2720

2695. from Atthenes doun sent R.

2696. bookis] folk R. 2697. Posiphe R.

2704. Posiphe R. 2705. liklynesse] liknesse R.

2706. that at R.

2709. hem] om. J, R. 2715. sumwhile] sume tyme R —
can] gan R.

2716. o] a R — fouyl R.

2717. these materes] this mateer R — will I R.

2719. wer constreynyd R. 2721. made was R.

The* statut was so inli rigerous, 2724
 Thei took ther sort as it cam a-boute,
 Til atte laste it fill on Theseus,
 That he mut gon foorth a-mong the route,
 Kyng Eges sone, beyng in gret doute 2728
 Touchyng his liff, which myht nat be socoured,
 But that he muste with othre be deuoured.

and Theseus,

Which Theseus, for his worthynesse, [p. 35]
 And off his knyhtod for the gret ences 2732
 Thoruh manly force, & for his hih prowesse
 Whilom was callid the seconde Hercules,
 Mong Amazones put hymselff in pres,
 Weddid Ypolita, as bookis specefe, 2736
 The hardi queen [callid] off Femynye.

who
 afterwards
 married
 Hippolyte,
 queen of the
 Amazons,

And afftirward to Thebes he is gon,
 Halp there the ladies in especiall,
 Which that compleyned vpon the kyng Creon, 2740
 Which hem destourbed, lik ther estat roiall
 To holde and halwe the festis funerall
 Off ther lordis, as queenys & pryncessis,
 Off wifli trouthe to shewe ther kyndenesis. 2744

and helped
 the ladies of
 Thebes
 against the
 tyranny of
 Creon,

For whan this Duk the maner hadde seyn,
 And off Creon the grete iniquite,
 To the ladies he made delyuere a-geyn
 Ther lordis bonys, off routhe & off pite. 2748
 Yit in his youthe out off his cite
 He was delyuered, bi statut ful odible,
 To be deuoured off this beeste horrible.

was
 sent to
 Minos,

He goth to prisoun, for al his semlynesse, 2752
 As the statut felli dede ordeyne;
 But off routhe and off gentillesse,
 Hym to preserue from that dedli payne,
 Off kyng Mynos the goodli douhtren tweyne, 2756
 Adriane shoop off a remedie,
 And faire Phedra, that he shal nat die.

whose
 daughters re-
 solved to
 save him
 from the
 Minotaur,

Thoruh ther helpe he hath the monstre slayn,
 That was so dreedful & ougli for to see; 2760
 Bi hem he scapid, wheroff he was ful fayn,

which he slew.
 He falsly de-
 serted
 Ariadne for
 Phædra,

2724. The] Ther B.

2735. Among Amozones he put R. 2736. Ipolito R.

2741. disturblid R. 2748. Ther] The R. 2757. off] om. R.

2758. shal] shuld R. 2760. so] om. R. 2761. wheroff] wherfor R.

and Ariadne
became the
wife of
Bacchus.

Unlike men,
women are
constant, un-
less their
husbands be-
have badly
to them.

Fortune was
unkind to
Mynos:

Pasiphae com-
mitted
adultery
(husbands
should bear
such things
in patience),
his daughters
ran away,
the Minotaur
was killed,
Theseus es-
caped, Athens
was freed from
its tribute, and
Theseus for-
sook Ariadne
and married
Phædra.

- Lad hem with hym, toward his contre.
And bi the weie, deuoid off al pite,
Adriane he falsli hath forsake 2764
A-geyn his surance, & Phedra he hath take.
Amyd the se [he] lefft hir in an ile,
Toward no parti she knew no declyn;
She crieth, wepith, allas, the harde while! 2768
For off hir fate this was the mortal fyn,
That for pite Bachus, the god off wyn,
Took hir to wyue, whos crowne of stonys fyne
Doth now in heuene with the sterris shyne. 2772
Thus off Theseus ye may beholde and see
To Adryane the gret onstedfastnesse,
The grete ontrouthe, the mutabilite,
The broke assurance and newfangilnesse; 2776
But celi women keepe ther stedfastnesse
Ay ondefouled, sauff, sumwhile off ther kynde,
Thei must hem purueie, whan men be* founde
onkynde.
Off Theseus I can no more now seyn 2780
In this mater to make off hym memorie,
But to kyng Mynos I will resorte a-geyn
To tell how Fortune, ay fals & transitorie,
In what poyntis diffacid hath his glorie. 2784
First off echon Bochas doth specifice
Off Pasiphe the foule aduout[e]rie,
Which was his wiff, and stood weel in his grace,
To his plesance she was most souerayne; 2788
But a cloude off [a] smal trespase
Made hir lord at hir to disdeyne:
But he off wisdam bar preuyli his peyne,
For in this cas, this is my sentence, 2792
Lat prudent husbandis take hem to pacience.
On* other thyngis Mynos gan compleyne,
Hauyng in herte theroff ful gret greuauunce,
That he so loste his faire douhtren tweyne, 2796
2764. full falsly he hath R. 2765. Ayenste R — assurance R.
2766. Amyd] In myddis R, J, H 5 — he] om. H.
2768. She wepith she crieth R. 2772. the] ix. R.
2776. and] & the R. 2778. Ay] But euere R — sumwhile]
sum tyme R. 2779. be] been B — founde] om. H.
2781. In] of H. 2783. ay] euere R. 2786. Posiphe R,
H 5, Pasipha P. 2789. 2nd a] om. R, H, R 3, P.
2792. in this] such R. 2793. hem] hede R.
2794. On] And on B, H — Mynos] om. H — gan] gan also R, J.

And Mynotaurus slay[e]n with myschaunce.
 Eek onto hym it was a gret penaunce
 That Theseus was gon at liberte,
 And from al tribut delyuered his cite.

2800

It greued hym eek in contenance & cheer,
 That Theseus Adriane forsook,
 It liked hym nat also the maneer
 Onto his wiff that he Phedra took;
 And yit this Phedra, lich as seith my book,
 Hadde too sonys bi this Theseus,
 First Demephon & next Anthilocus.

2804

Eek Theseus afftir gan hym drawe
 Toward Cecile, in steel armyd cleene,
 With Pirotheus, in armys his felawe,
 For to rauysshe Proserpyna the queene.
 But off entent Phedra ful oncleene,
 Loued hir stepsonne callid Ypolitus.
 But for he was to hire daungerous,

2808 Theseus then
 went to Sicily,
 and Phædra
 fell in love
 with her
 step-son
 Hippolytus.

2812

And to hir lust froward and contrarie,
 In his apport nat goodli nor benigne,
 Off fals entent anon she gan to varie,
 And a-geyn hym ful felli to maligne,
 With a pretence off many tokne & signe
 Off womanhed, she gan hym accuse,
 Hire auoutry falsli to excuse.

[p. 36]

2816

Who seith that women can nat ymagyne
 In ther diffence talis ful vntrewe,
 To ther desir yiff men list nat enclyne
 Nor on ther feyned fals[e] wo to rewe,
 Anon thei can compasse[n] thynges newe,
 Fisshe and fynde out in ther entencioun
 A couert cloude to shadwe ther tresoun.

2820

2824 When he
 repulsed her,
 she turned
 on him
 (women are
 well able to
 lie in their
 own interest)

2828

She hath accusid yonge Ypolitus
 Off fals auoutri in his tendre age,
 Tolde & affermed to duk Theseus,
 With ful bold cheer[e] & a pleyn visage,
 How he purposed in his furious rage

2832 and accused
 him to
 Theseus of
 improper con-
 duct toward
 her.

2798, 2801, 2808. Eek] Also R. 2803. nat] nouth R.

2804. he] sche R. 2807. Demophan R.

2816. nor] ne R. 2818. ayens his R. 2819. many a H.

2823. ful] om. R.

2825. Nor] Neithir R — fals feyned R. 2826. compassh R.

2832. a] om. R.

Onli bi force hir beute to oppresse,
Hir lord besechyng to refourme & redresse

(Women are
sometimes
very un-
truthful;

The grete iniurie doon onto his wiff 2836

Whil he was absent for thyngis that bar charge.

Wyues off talis been *sum*while inuentiff

To suffre ther tungen falsli fleen at large; 2840

But folk that list off daunger hem discharge,

Off such accusyng ne take thei noon heed

Til the trouthe be tried out in deed.

of course I
don't mean
good and in-
nocent ones,
but there
are very few
of that sort.)

I meene nothing off wyues that been goode,

Nor off women that floure in innocence; 2844

For God forbeede, and the Hooli Rood,

But men sholde do deu reuerence

To ther noblesse and ther excellence,

Declare ther bounte and ther vertu shewe, 2848

And more them cherisse be-cause ther be so fewe.

Hippolytus
was frightened
and fled.

Touchyng thaccusyng ageyn Ypolitus,

Thouh it so were that it was fals in deede,

Yit he for shame and* feer off Theseus, 2852

As in the story ye may beholde and reede,

In his herte he cauhte a maner dreede,

That he, alas! this cely yonge knyht,

Fledde & withdrouh hym out off his fadris siht, 2856

His horses
ran away
and he and his
chariot were
overwhelmed
by a landslide;

His indignacioun pleyntli to cshewe,

Thouh bi desert in hym ther was no lak.

Off hasti dreed as he gan remewe

Other in a chaar or vpon hors[e]bak, 2860

His hors affraied, ther fill a sodeyn wrak

Doun from a roche pendant, as ye shal lere —

He and his chaar wer drownyd bothe Ifeere.

and Phædra,
fearing the
vengeance
of Theseus,
slew herself.

Thus ongilti, in his most lusti youthe

He was conueied to his destruccioun;

The sclandre conspired, as it is weel kouthe,

Bi fals[e] Phedra: but in conclusioun

The sclandre turned to hir confusioun; 2868

For whan she wiste Ypolitus was ded

Thoruh hir defaute, anon for shame & dreed

2834. oppresse] presse R. 2835. redresse] dresse R.

2836. iniurie] iniquyte R — onto] to R.

2838. *sum*tyme been R.

2840. folkis R — daunger] damage R.

2850. thaccusyng] this accusyng R.

2851. 2nd it] he R — was] wer H. 2852. and] and for B.

She took a* sword, ful sharp[e] whet & grounde,
 And therewithall she rooff hir herte on tweyne. 2872
 Loo, how that vengauce will euer* a-geyn rebounde
 On hem that falsli doon ther bisi peyne
 To sclandre folk; for lik as thei ordeyne
 With ther defautis othir folkis tattwite, 2876
 God atte laste ther malice can acquite!

Such things
 happen to
 people who
 slander others.

Yit summe bookis off Phædra do recorde
 That she, a-shamyd & confus off this deede,
 Heeng hersilff up ful hih[e] with a corde. 2880
 Loo, how fals sclandre can quite folk ther meede!
 Wherefore, I counseile eueri man tak heede,
 In such materis as stonde in noun certeyn,
 From hasty doomys his tunge to restreyn. 2884

And it would
 also be well
 for men not
 to draw
 hasty con-
 clusions, as
 Theseus seems
 to have done.

A MONG these stories woful for to reede,
 Al bespreynt with teris in his face,
 Ful sodenli, Iohn Bochar gan take* heede,
 A-mydd the pres Zizara cam in place — 2888
 And how that Fortune gan eek to manace
 This proude duk, ful myhti & notable,
 Off kyng Iabyn callid the grete constable.

Sisera,
 Jabin's
 general,

Off his hoost ledere and gouernour, 2892
 To Israel verray mortalt fo;
 With peple he rood lich a conquerour,
 And wher that euer his meyne dede go,
 The erthe quook, peeplis drad hym so, 2896
 Fledde from his face wher-as he cam a-ferre.
 Nyne hundred waynes he hadde for the werre,

mortal foe
 to the Jews,

Strongli enarmed with hookes made lyk*sithes, [p. 37]
 Whothat approched to mayme*hym & towounde. 2900
 For this tirant off custum offte sithes

2871. a] his B, hir H — sherp I whet & groun R.
 2872. rooff] raff R — on tweyne] atweyne R.
 2873. that] om. H — euer] ay B, H, R 3, om. P.
 2876. defautis] diffamys — to atwyte R.
 2877. malice] mateeres H — can] gan R.
 2880. ful] wol H. 2881. folk quyte for þer mede R.
 2884. hasty] om. H — hasty doomys] his hasty language R.
 2887. take] taken B.
 2888. A-mydd] In middes R — in] to R.
 2889. eek] also R. 2896. peple R.
 2899. made lyk] & with B, H.
 2900. mayme] mayne B, H, H 5 — hym] om. R, J.

Hadde gret delit the Iewes to confounde;
 And alle tho that his swerd hath founde,
 Kyng Iabyn bad, the prynce off Canaan,
 In Israel to spare child nor man. 2904

was suffered
 by God to
 chastise their
 sins.

This Zizara was sent to been ther scourge,
 Bi Goddis suffrance ther synnes to chastise,
 Ther olde offences to punshen & to pource,
 As a flagelle, in many sundry wise; 2908
 But whan off resoun thei gan hem bet deuyse,
 And for ther trespacis to falle in repentaunce,
 God gan withdrawe the hand off his vengauce. 2912

But when
 they repented,

For in ther myscheef thei gan the * Lord to knowe,
 Felyng the prikke off his punycioun;
 And mercy thanne hath vnbent the bowe
 Off his fell ire and castigacioun: 2916
 To God thei made ther inuocacioun,
 And he hem herde in ther mortal dreede.
 In Iudicum the story ye may reede,

God sent
 Deborah in
 their defence,

How in the while that this Zizara 2920
 Shoop hym off newe Iewes to oppresse,
 In ther diffence God sent hem Delbora,
 A prophetesse, the story berth witnesse,
 To yeue hem counsail ther harmys to redresse, 2924
 And bi the sperit off hir prophecye
 For to withstonde the grete tyrannye

Off Zizara, which was descendid doun
 With a gret hoost into the feeld repaired. 2928
 But Delbora, of hih discrecioun,
 Whan that she sauh the Iewes disespeired,
 And for to fihthe ther corages sore appeired,
 She made hem first deuoutli in ther dreed 2932
 To crie to God to helpe hem in ther need.

who became
 their leader
 and judge.

She was ther iuge and ther gouerneresse,
 Cheeff off ther counsail; & off custom she,
 Causis dependyng, bi gret avisynesse, 2936
 That stood in doute, bi doom off equite
 She tried hem out vnder a palme tre,

2904. the] *om.* R. 2905. nor] ne J, R 3, H 5, P.

2910. bet] better R. 2911. ther] the R.

2912. gan] can R. 2913. the] ther B, H.

2919. *Marginal note in R:* "Nota Iudicum iiii Ca°."

2921. the Iewis R.

2928. hoost] coste R. 2932. ther] þat R. 2936. bi] of R.

And was nat hasty* no mater to termyne
Til she the parties affor dede examyne.

2940

And whan she knew & herde off the komyng
Off Zizara with ful gret puissaunce,
That was constable off the myhti kyng
Callid Iabyn, with al his ordenaunce,
Vpon Iewes for to doon vengauce,
This Delbora gan prudentli entende
The Iewes parti bi wisdam to diffende.

When she
heard that
Sisera had
come with
his army,

2944

She bad Barach, hir husbonde, anon riht
Off Neptalym ten thousand with hym take,
Geyn Zizara to fhten for ther riht,
And that he sholde a gret enarme make.
But he for dreed this iourne gan forsake,
And durste nat a-geyn hym tho werreye
But she were present, and list hym to conveye.

2948

she bade
Barak, her
husband, lead
a host against
him. But as
Barak was
afraid,

2952

"Weel weel," quod she, "sithe it stondith so,
That off wantrust ye haue a maner dreed,
I will my-silff[e] gladli with you go,
You to supporte in this grete need;
But tristith fulli, as ye shal fynde in deed,
That a woman, with laude, honour & glorie,
Shal fro you wynne the pris off this victorye."

2956

she herself
took com-
mand of his
forces.

2960

It folwid afftir sothli as she saide.
Aუსili she made hir ordynaunce,
And the cheeff charge on hirsilff she laide,
As pryncesse off Iewes gouernaunce,
And prudentli gan hirsilff auauce,
With God conueied & support off his grace,
With Zizara to meetyn in the face.

2964

Sisera fled

2968

And specialli touchyng this viage,
God took a-way the sperit and the myht
Fro Zizara, his force and his corage,
That he was ferfull tentren into fyht,
Kepte his chaar & took hym onto flyht,
Knowyng no place seurli in tabide,
Til that Iahel, a woman, dede hym hide

to the tent
of a woman
called Iael,

2972

2939. hasty] hardi B, hardy H.
2940. afforne H. 2941. herd & knew R.
2948. Barish H.
2950. Geyn] Azens R.
2956. That] Than H. 2972. feerdful R.
2973. onto] into R. 2975. Iael R.

who
drove a nail
into his
head while
he slept.

Withynne hir tente, almost ded for dreed, 2976
Vnder a mantell desirous for to drynke.
She gaff hym mylk; the slep fill in his hed,
And whil that he for heuynesse gan wynke
And sadli slepte, she gan hir to be-tyhnke; 2980
Thouhte she wolde for Zizara so shape,
That with the liff he shulde nat escape.

Such is the
fate of
tyrants!

She took a nail that was sharp & long, [p. 38]
And couertli gan hirsilff auauunce; 2984
With an hamer myhti, round & strong
She droff the nail — loo, this was hir vengauce! —
Thoruhout his hed: seeth heer þe sodeyn chaunce
Off tirantis that trusten on Fortune, 2988
Which wil nat suffre hem longe to contune

Let Sisera be
an example
to you. No
lordship en-
dures with-
out virtue.

In ther fals vsurped tirannye
To holde peeplis in long subieccioun.
She can hem blandissh* with hir flat[e]rye 2992
Vnder a colour off fals collusioun,
And with a sodeyn transmutacioun
Fortune hem can, that pore folkis trouble,
Reuerse ther pride with hir face double. 2996

What sholde I lengere in this mater tarye?
Thouh that lordshep be myhti & famous,
Lat Zizara been your exaumpylye,
It nat endureth but it be vertuuous. 3000
Conquest, victory, thouh thei be glorious,
Onto the world, yiff vertu be behynde,
Men nat reioise to haue ther name in mynde.

For Fortune thoruh hir frowardnesse 3004
Hath kyngis put out off ther regiouns,
And she hath also thoruh hir doubilnesse
Destroied lynages, with ther successiouns:
Made she nat whilom hir translaciouns 3008
Off the kyngdam callid Argyuois,
To be transportid to Lacedemonois?

Sisera's pride
was humbled,
when he stood
at the height
of his glory.

The same tyme whan Zizara the proude
Gan Goddis peple to putte vnder foote,
Famys trumpe bleuh his name up loude 3012

2986. this was hir] heer H. 2988. Off] On R.
2992. blandisshen B. 2995. folk R. 2996. hir] the R.
3008. whilom] sume tyme R. 3010. Lacidomonis R, J.
3013. Famys] Fame his R.

With sugred sownys semyng wonder soote;
 But al his pride was rent up bi the roote,
 Whan that his glori was outward most shewyng; 3016
 But who may truste on any worldli thyng!

FOLK han afforn seyn the fundacioun,
 Bi remembraunce off old antiquite,
 Off myhti Troye and* off Ylioun, 3020
 Afftir destroyed bi Grekis that cite,
 To vs declaryng the mutabilite
 Off fals Fortune, whos fauour last no while,
 Shewyng ay trewest whan she will begile. 3024

So variable she is in hir delites,
 Hir wheel vntrusti & frowardli meuyng,
 Record I take off the Madianytes,
 Ther vnwar fall ful doolfully pleynyng, 3028
 Which shewed hemsilff [ful] pitousli wepyng
 To Iohn Bochas, as he in writyng souhte
 How that Fortune a-geyn ther princis wrouhte,

Which that gouerned the lond off Madian, 3032
 Trustyng off pride in ther gret puissaunce;
 And a-geyn Iewes a werre thei be-gan,
 Purposyng to brynge hem to vttraunce:
 But God that holdeth off werre the balaunce, 3036
 And can off pryncis oppresse the veynglory,
 Yeueth wher hym list conquest & victory,

Nat to gret noumbre nor to gret multitude,
 But to that parti where he seeth the riht; 3040
 His dreedful hand, shortli to conclud,
 So halt up bi grace and yeueth liht*
 The hiere hand, where he caste his siht;
 List his power and his fauour shewe, 3044
 Be it to many or be it ontofewe.

The wrong[e] parti gladli hath a fall,
 Thouth ther be mylliouns many mo than oon:
 I take wisse off Ieroboall, 3048

Fortune's
 fauour does
 not last
 long.

Think of the
 Midianites,
 who came
 weeping to
 Bochas.

They began
 a war on
 the Jews,

but God
 gives victory
 not to num-
 bers but to
 right.

3014. sugred] sacrid R.

3018. fmyacioun J. 3020. and] and eek B.

3024. ay trewest] euer trust R. 3030. writyng] bokys H.

3039. nor] ne R.

3042. halt] holdith H 5 — So haldith vp his grace P — liht
 to euery wiht B, H, euery wight P.

3046. in R: nota Ca° vj & Ca° vij Iudicum.

Gideon defeated the
Midianites
with 300 men.

Which is also callid Gedeon,
That with thre hundrid fauht a-geyn the foon
Off Israell, the Bible can deuyse,
Whan he to God hadde doon his sacrefise. 3052

Shewyng to hym a signe merueilous,
Whan the flees with siluer deuh ful sheene
Was spreynt and wet, the story tellith thus,
And round a-boute the soil and al the greene 3056
Was founde drie, and no drope seene,
In tokne onli, this duk, this knyhtli man,
Shold ha[ue] victory off al Madian.

Although he
was weak in
numbers,

Thus Gedeon took with hym but a fewe, 3060
Thre hundred chose, which laped* the ryuer,
God onto hym such toknys dede shewe
And euydencis afforn that wer ful cleer,
That he sholde been off riht good cheer 3064
And on no parti his aduersaries dreede,
For no* prowesse nouthir* [for] manheede.

God gave
him victory.

Where God a-boue holdith* chaumpartie, [p. 39]
There may a-geyn hym be makid no diffence; 3068
Force, strengthe, wisdom nor cheualrie
A-geyns his myht ar feeble off resistance.
This was weel preued in experience,
Whan thre hundred with Gedeon in noumbre 3072
So many thousandis bi grace dede encoumbre.

They ter-
rified their
enemies by
blowing their
trumpets,
breaking
empty pots
and suddenly
shewing the
light of their
lamps.

This said[e] peeple, deuyded into thre,
With ther trumpis, vpon the dirk[e] nyht,
Bi Gedeon, that hadde the souereynthe, 3076
With void[e] pottis & laumpis therynne lyht;
And thus arraied thei entred into fyht.
But onto hem this tokne was first knowe:
Whan Gedeon his trumpe dede blowe, 3080

Thei bleuh echon & loude gan to crie,
Brak ther pottis and shewed anon riht,
As the story pleyntly doth specefie,

3050. thre] iij B.

3061. laped] scaped B, P, H 5, scapid H, J, scapide R 3 —
which] with R. 3064.] om. R.

3066. For no] ne for noo R 3, — no] nouht B, nouzt J, nought
H 5 — nouthir] nor B, neithir R, neiper J, neyther P.

3067. holdith] halt B, H. 3069. nor] nethir R.

3070. ar] or R. 3075. trumpis] triumphis R.

3083. doth pleyntly R.

Ther laumpis shewed with a ful sodeyn liht,
Wheroff ther enmyes, astonyd in ther siht,
Were so troublid vpon euery side,
That in the feeld thei durst[e] nat a-bide.

3084 Whereupon the
Midianites
fed.

The cri was this off hem euerichon:
"Thank to the Lord most noble & glorious,
Pris to the suerd off myhti Gedeon,
Which vs hath causid to be victorious,
Maad our enmyes, most malicious,
Thoruh influence onli off his grace,
For verray feer to fleen afforn our face!"

3088

Thus can the Lord off his magnyficence
The meeke exalte & the proude oppresse,
Lich as he fyndeth in hertis difference,
So off his power he can his domys dresse,
Merçi ay meynt with his rihtwisnesse,
His iugementis with long delay differrid;
And or he punshe, pite is ay preferrid.

3092

3096 Thus the
Lord can
exalt the
meek and
humble the
proud.

3100

¶ Lenvoye.

MIHTI Princis, remembre that your power
Is transitory & no while a-bidyng,
As this tragedie hath rehersed heer
Bi euidentis ful notable in shewyng,
And bexamples, in substaunce witnessyng,
That all tirantis, platli to termyne,
Mut from ther staat sodenli declyne.

3104

Princes, re-
member, your
power is not
lasting.

Phebus is freshest in his mydday speer,
His bemys brihdest & hattest out spredyng;
But cloudi skies ful offte approche neer
Teclipse his liht with ther vnwar comyng:
Noon ertheli ioie is longe heer abidyng,
Record off Titan, which stound[e]meel doth shyne,
Yit toward nyht his stremys doun declyne.

3108

3112 Phoebus is
brightest at
midday, but
his light is
often dimmed
by clouds.

Whan that Fortune is fairest off hir cheer
Bi apparence, and most blandisshyng,
Thanne is [she] falsest ech sesoun off the yeer,
Hir sodeyn chaungis now vp now doun turnyng;
The nyhtyngale in May doth fresshli syng,

3116

When
Fortune seems
fairest, then
is she most
ready to
change.

3120

3089. Thank] than H.

3109. Phebus is freshest] Phebus shen freish R.

3110. out spredyng] out shewyng R. 3119. chaunge R.

Remember
the un-
certainty of
all earthly
happiness.

But a bakwynter can somer vndermyne
And al his fresshnesse sodenli declyne.

Al ertheli blisse dependith in a weer,
In a ballaunce oneuenli hangyng, — 3124
O Pryncis, Pryncessis most souereyn & enteere,
In this tragedie conceyueth be redyng,
How that estatis bi ful vnwar chaungyng,
Whilom ful worthi, ther lyues dede fyne, 3128
Whan fro ther noblesse thei wer maad to declyne.

[Of mighty Iabyn Kyng of Canane, of quene Iocasta/
and how Thebes was destroyed.]¹

Now I will
write about
the fall of
Jabin, rebel
to God,

NOW must I write the grete sodeyn fall
Off myhti Iabyn for his inquite, 3132
Which onto Iewes was enmy ful mortall,
With sceptre & crowne regnyng in Canane,
And vpon Affrik hadde the souereynte,
Rebel to God, and list hym nat obeye,
But euer redi his peeple to werreye. 3136

who long
forbore to
punish him,

The Lord a-boue, seyng the tyrannye,
Forbar his hand with ful long suffraunce,
And was nat hasti on his obstynacye,
Lich his desert, for to do vengauce; 3140
But ay this Iabyn bi contynuaunce
Endured foorth in his cursidnesse,
Til that the suerd off Goddis rihtwisnesse

but finally
threw him
down in the
midst of his
pride.

Was whet ageyn hym, this tirant to chastise. 3144
And to repress his rebellioun,
From his kyngdam, the story doth deuise,
Mid off his pride he was pullid down,
Texemplefie wher domynacioun 3148
Is founde wilfull trouthe to ouercaste,*
God wil nat suffre ther power longe laste.

For this Iabyn, founde alway froward, [p. 40]
Off hih disdeyn list nat the Lord to knowe, 3152
Therefore his power drouh alwey bakward,

3121. abak wynter H 5, aback winter P.

3127. ful] om. R. 3128. Whilom] Sumtyme R.

3133. Chanane R. 3136. redi] redy is R. 3137. the] this R.

3141. ay] euer R. 3147. Mid] In myddis R.

3148. wher] the R.

3149. to ouercaste] touercaste B.

¹ MS. J. leaf 17 recto.

And his empire was I-brouht ful lowe;
 His roial fame Fortune hath ouerthrowe,
 His name eclipsid, that whilom shon so cleer 3156
 Off grete Cison beside the ryueer.

OFF queen Iocasta Bochas doth eek endite,
 Pryncesse off Thebes, a myhti gret cite,
 Off hir vnhappis he doolfulli doth write, 3160
 Ymagynyng how he dede hir see
 To hym appeere in gret aduersite,
 Lich a woman that wolde in teres reyne,
 For that Fortune gan at hir so disdeyne. 3164

Bochas also
 tells the story
 of Queen
 Iocasta,

Thouh she were diffacid off figure,
 Ther shewed in hir a maner maieste
 Off queenli honour, pleynli to discure
 Hir infortunys and hir infelicite, 3168
 And to declare pleynli how that she
 Off all princessis which euer stood in staat,
 She was hirselff the moste infortunat.

who appeared
 before him
 proudly declar-
 ing her misfor-
 tunes.

Which gaff to Bochas ful gret occasioun,
 Whan he sauh hir pitous apparaile, 3172
 For to make a lamentacioun
 Off vnkouth sorwe which dede hir assaile,
 With a tragedie to wepyn and bewaile 3176
 Hir inportable & straunge dedli striff,
 Which that she hadde duryng al hir liff.

He wrot off hir a story large & pleyn,
 And off hir birthe first he doth diffyne, 3180
 And affermeth in his book certeyn,
 She was descendid off a noble lyne;
 In flouryng age eek whan she dede shyne,
 She weddid was, for hir gret beute, 3184
 Onto the kyng off Thebes the cite,

She came of a
 noble line and
 married Laius,
 king of Thebes,

Which in his tyme was callid Layus.
 And whan hir wombe bi processe gan arise,
 The kyng was glad and also desirous 3188

3154.] And his empire was afir þat brouht ful lowe R.
 3156. whilom] some R. 3157. Cisoun J.
 3158. eek] also R. 3168. hir felicittee R.
 3170. stoden in estate R. 3171. the] om. R.
 3173. sauh] seeth R. 3175. sorowis R.
 3176. bewaile] to waile R.
 3179. wrot] writ R, H, P, write H 5, writte J — a] om. R.
 3183. eek] also R — she] þat she R. 3187. arise] to rise H.

The childes fate to knowe[n] in sum wise,
 And thouhte he wolde go do sacrefise
 Onto Appollo, to haue* knowyng aforn*
 Touchyng this child whan that it were born. 3192

who, when she
 became
 pregnant,
 asked Appollo
 what would be
 the destiny
 of the child.

What sholde folwen in conclusioun,
 He was desirous and hasti for to see,
 First bi the heuenli disposicioun,
 And bi the fauour, yiff it wolde be, 3196
 Off Appollos myhti deite
 To haue answere, a-mong his rihtis all,
 Off his child what fate ther sholde fall.

Appollo said it
 was fated to
 kill its father.

His answere, thouh it were contrarie 3200
 To his desir, yit was it thus* in deede:
 Appollo told hym, & list no lenger tarie,
 That this child sholde verraili in deede
 Slen his fader, & make his sides bleede, 3204
 And with his handis; ther was noon othir weie,
 But on his swerd he muste needis deie.

When his son
 was born, the
 king bade men
 put him to
 death in a
 forest.

The kyng was heuy and trist off this sentence,
 Sorful in herte, God wot, and no thyng fayn, 3208
 And caste afforn thoruh his prouidence,
 That his sone in al haste sholde be slayn,
 And that he wolde nat oon hour delayn
 Afftir his berthe, but bad his men to goon 3212
 Into a forest and sle the child a-noon.

Lik his bidding the mynystres wrouhte in^e deede,
 Takyng the child, tendre and yong off age;
 And in-tafforest with hem thei gan it leede, 3216
 To be deuoured off beestis most sauage:
 The mooder, allas, fill almost in a rage,
 Seyng hir child, so inli fair off face,
 Shal thus be ded, and dede no trespace. 3220

His mother al-
 most went mad
 for grief,

Litil wonder thouh she felte smerte!
 To all women I reporte me,
 And onto moodres that be tendre off herte,

3189. fate] state R, staat J. 3191. to haue] ta B —
 knowlychyng afforn R — aforn] befor H, tofforn B.

3192. were] was R. 3193. What] That R.

3196. yiff] om. R. 3198. rihtis] wittis R.

3199. ther sholde fall] schuld befall R.

3201. thus] this B. 3205. noon othir] noþer R.

3208. sorowfull H — in] off R. 3209. thoruh] om. R.

3211. delayn] delay R. 3215. yong & tendre H.

3216. into a forest R — it] hym R. 3218. almost fill into R.

In this mater iuges for to be.

Was it nat routhe, was it nat pite,

That a pryncesse and a queen, allas,

Sholde knowyn hir child deuoured in such cas!

3224 which was not
astonishing
in the
circumstances.

Afftir his berth Layus took good keep,

Withoute mercy, respit or delay,

That onto oon, which that kepte his sheep,

This yonge child vpon a certeyn day

Shal be delyuered in al the haste he may,

To this entent, it myht nat be socourid,

But that he sholde off beestis be deuourid.

3228

3232

This seid[e] shepperde goth foorth a-noon riht, [p.41]

The child beholdyng, benygne off look & face,

Thouhte in his herte & in his inward siht,

He sholde doon to God a gret trespace

To slen this child; wherfore he dede hym grace, —

Took first a knyff, & dede his besi peyne

Thoruhout his feet to make holis tweyne.

3236 But the shep-
herd who was
commanded
to slay the
child had
compassion,
and, piercing
his feet, hung
him up in a
tree,

3240

Took a smal* rod off a yong* oseer,

Perced the feet, allas, it was pite! —

Bond hym faste, and bi good leiseer

The yonge child he heeng vpon a tre,

Off entent that he ne sholde be

Thoruh wilde beestis, cruel & sauage,

Been sodenli deuoured in ther rage.

3244

3248

Vpon the tre whil he heeng thus bounde,

Off auenture bi sum occasioun,

A straunge shepperde hath the child I-founde,

Which that off routhe & pite* took hym down,

Bar it with hym hoom onto his toun,

Made his wiff for to doon hir peyne

To fostre the child with hir brestis tweyne.

3252

3256

And whan he was brouht forth & recurid,

And ful maad hool off his woundis sore,

The yonge child, which al this hath endurid,

When he in age gan to wexe more,

And that nature gan hym to restore,

The said[e] shepperde, that loued hym best off all,

Afftir his hurtis Edippus dede hym call.

3260 and called him
Oedipus,

3230. which] om. R.

3241. feet] hert R.

3242. smal and yong are transposed in B — osier R, P, H 5.

3252. pite & routhe B, P. 3253. onto] in to R.

3258. The] This R. 3259. began R.

- For Edippus is no more to seyne,
 Who that conceyueth the xpositioun,
 But feet Ipershid throuhout bothe tweyne,
 In that language, as maad is menciouñ. 3264
- and presented
 him to Queen
 Merope, wife
 of Polybus.
 And to Meropa, wyff off kyng Poliboun,
 The shepperde, off ful humble entente, 3268
 Gan the child ful lowli to presente.
- Thus Edipus
 became the
 adopted son
 and heir of the
 king of
 Corinth.
 And for she was bareyn off nature,
 She and the kyng off oon affeccioun
 Took Edippus bothe into ther cure, 3272
 As sone and heir bi adopcoun,
 To regne in Corynthe bi successioun;
 The kyng, the queen off Corynthe the contre
 Haddyn the child in so gret cheerte. 3276
- How sudden
 are the
 changes of
 Fortune!
 Let men considre in ther discrecioun
 Sodeyn chaung off euery maner thyng:
 This child sent out for his destruccioun,
 And now prouydid for to been a kyng; 3280
 And thoruh Fortune, ay double in hir werkyng,
 He that was refus to beestis most sauage,
 Is now receyued to kyngli heritage.
- Destitut he was off his kenreede, 3284
 Forsake and abiect off blood & off allie,
 In tendre youthe his feet wer'maad to bleede,
 Heeng on a tre and gan for helpe crie;
 But God that can in myscheeff magnefie 3288
 And reconforte folk disconsolat,
 Hath maad this child now so fortunat,
- And prouyded to been a kyngis heir,
 Off hym that stood off deth in auenture. 3292
 Fortune can shewe hir-selff bothe foul & fair,
 Folkis brouht lowe ful weel a-geyn recure;
 And such as can pacientli endure,
 And list nat gruchch a-geyn ther chastisyng, 3296
 God out off myscheeff can sodenli hem bryng.
- But whan Edippus was growe vp to good age,
 Lich a yong prynce encresyng in noblesse,
 Lusti and strong, and fresh off his corage, 3300
3269. Be gan R, J.
 3286. youthe] yough R.
 3287. on] vp on R — bigan for to crie R — helpe] to H.
 3295. such as can] sich (siche) as paiently can R, J.
 3299. encresshying R.

Off auenture it fill so in sothnesse,
 Other be striff or be sum frowardnesse,
 Or be sum kontek, he hadde knowlechyng
 How he was nat sone onto the kyng

Edipus soon
 learned that he
 was not the
 real son of
 King Polybus,

3304

As be discent, but a ferr foreyn.
 Wherupon ful sore he gan to muse,
 And for to knowe and be put in certeyn,
 Thouhte he wolde sum maner practik vse;
 And to the kyng he gan hymselff excuse,
 For a tyme withdrawyn his presence,
 Til that he knew bi sum experience

3308

Or bi sum signe how the mateer stood.
 Thouhte he wolde doon his dilligence
 To knowe his fader, and also off what blood
 He was descendid, and haue sum euidence
 Touchyng trouthe, how it stood in sentence.
 And heerupon to be certefied,
 Toward Appollo faste he hath hym hied,

3312

and consulting
 the oracle of
 Apollo,

3316

Which in Cirra worsheped was that tyme,
 And yaff answeris thoruh his deite
 To folk that cam, at euen and at pryme,
 Off eueri doute and ambiguite.

[p. 42]

3320

And there Edippus, fallyng on his kne,
 Afftir his offryng haddē answerē anoon,
 Toward Greece that he sholde goon

3324

Onto a mounteyn that Phocis bar the name;
 And there he sholde off his kenrede heere.
 Eek lik his fate the answerē was the same:
 He sholde slen his owne fader deere,
 And afftir that to Thebes drawe hym neere,
 Wedde his mooder, off verray ignoraunce,
 Callid Iocasta, thoruh his vnhappi chaunce.

was told that
 he would hear
 of his kindred
 if he went to
 Mt. Phocis,

3328

He list no lengere tarien nor abide,
 This said Edippus, but foorth in haste goth he,
 And on his weye he gan [anon] to ride,
 Til he the mounteyn off Phocis dede see,
 Vnder the which stood a gret contre

which he did,

3336

3304. How] *om.* H.

3306. bigan R. 3308. practik] practiff R. 3309. began R.

3320. answer R. 3325. that] *om.* R. 3326. Onto] In to R.

3328. Eek] Also R. 3333. nor] ner R.

3335. he gan anon] gan H, R 3, he began anoon J, he biganne
 anon H 5, he gan anone P, began anone R.

Callid Citoiens, which that tyme in certeyn
Werreied hem that were on the mounteyn.

and there by
chance killed
his father,
Laius,

His fader Layus, throuh his cheualrie,
With Citoiens is entrid in bataile;
And Edippus cam with the partie
Off the hillis, armed in plate & maile.

3340

And as thei gan ech other to assaile,
Among the pres at ther encount[er]yng,
Off auenture Edippus slouh the kyng.

3344

without knowing
him.

Onknowe to hym that he his fader was,
Hauyng theroff no suspeciou[n];
Passid his way, platli this the cas,
And eek onknowe he cam onto the toun
Off myhti Thebes, where for his hih renoun
He was receyued with ful gret reuerence,
Because that he slouh in ther diffence

3348

At Thebes he
was received
with great
honour because
he slew the
Sphinx, a ser-
pent that pro-
pounded a rid-
dle to be solved
on pain of
death.

Spynx the serpent, horrible for to see,
Whilom ordeyned bi incantacioun[s]
For to destroie the toun and the contre
Bi his compassid sleiht question[s].
Slouh man and child in all the regioun[s],
Such as nat koude bi wisdom or resoun
Make off his problem pleyn exposicioun.

3356

3360

Who passid bi, he koude hym nat excuse,
But the serpent hym felly wolde assaile,
With a problem make hym for to muse,
Callid off summe an vnkouth dyuynaile,
Which for texpowne, who that dede faile,
Ther was noon helpe nor other remedie,
Bi the statut but that he muste deie.

3364

Since all people
do not know
this riddle, I
will tell it to
you.

And for alle folk ha[ue] nat knowlechyng
Off this demaunde what it was in deede,
I will reherse it heer in my wrytyng
Compendiousli, that men may it reede.
First this serpent, who that list take heede,
Was monstrous & spak a-geyn nature,
And yiff it fill that any creature,

3368

3372

3338. in] om. R. 3343. hil R. 3344. began R.
3347. Onknowe] Vnknown R. 3349. this is R, J, H 5.
3350. eek] also R — onto] to R. 3356. destrie R.
3362. wolde hym felly R. 3364. summe an] sum men R.
3366. nor] nethir R. 3373. ayenst R.

Man or woman sholde forbi pace,
 Hih or low, off al that regioun, 3376
 As I seide erst, ther was noon othir grace,
 But yiff he made an exposicioun
 Off this serpentis froward questioun,
 He muste deie and make no diffence. 3380
 Which demaunde was this in sentence:

The serpent askid, what thyng may that be,
 Beeste or foul, whan it is foorth brouht,
 That hath no power to stonde, go nor fle; 3384
 And afttirward, yiff it be weel souht,
 Goth first on foure, & ellis goth he nouht:
 Afttir bi processe, on thre, & thanne on tweyne;
 And efft ageyn, as nature doth ordeyne, 3388

What creature
 is it that cannot
 stand when
 born, and goes
 first on four,
 then on three,
 and finally on
 two, and after-
 wards on three
 and four again?

He goth on thre and efft on foure ageyn,
 Off kyndly riht nature disposith it so.
 And in a while it folwith in certeyn,
 To the mateer which that he cam fro, 3392
 He muste off keende resorte ageyn therto.
 And who cannat the menyng cleerli see,
 He off this serpent shal deuoured be.

Which Edippus, ful so[b]re in his entent, 3396
 Nat to rakell nor hasti off language,
 But in his herte with gret auisement,
 And ful demur off look & [of] visage,
 Considred* ferst this pereilous fell passage, 3400
 Sauh weel toforn* that it was no iape,
 And ful prouyded that no woord escape,

Edipus
 answered
 with great dis-
 cretion,

At good leiser with hool mynde & memory, [p. 43]
 Seyng the earnest off this mortal emprise, 3404
 His liff dependyng a-twen deth and victory,
 "This beeste," quod he, "pleynli to deuise,
 Is first a child, which may nat suffise,
 Whan it is born, the trouthe is alday seene, 3408
 Withouten helpe hymselfen to susteene.

"This animal
 is a child,"

3375. forbi] furth bi R.

3377. erst] arst R.

3386. &] or R — he] it R.

3389. efft] aftir R.

3390. Off] Also R — riht] rith R.

3397. nor] orto R.

3400. Considred] Considreth B, R 3.

3401. Sauh] Seeth R, size J — toforn] befor B, R 3.

3405. bitwene R.

- Afftir on foure he naturali doth kрееe,
 For inpotence and greene tendirnesse,
 Norices can telle that* doon hem keepe. 3412
 But afftirward, vp he doth hym dresse
 With his too feet; the thriddle to expresse,
 Is hand or bench or support off sum wall
 To holde hym vp, list he cachche a fall. 3416
 And afftirward encresyng off his myht,
 To gretter age whan he doth atteyne,
 Off his nature thanne he goth vpriht,
 Mihtili vpon his leggis tweyne. 3420
 Thanne kometh age his power to restreyne,
 Crokid and lame, lik as men may see,
 With staff or potent to make up leggis thre.
 But whan feeblesse or siknesse doon assaile,
 On feet and handis he must bowe & loute;
 For crossid potentis may nat thanne auaille,
 Whan lusti age is bashed & shet oute. 3424
 Thanne efft ageyn, heeroff may be no doute,
 With foure feet terthe he doth retourne 3428
 Fro whens he cam, ther stille to soiourne."
 Al cam from erthe, and [al] to erthe shall;
 Ageyn nature is no proteccioun; 3432
 Worldli estat is echon thei be mortall,
 Ther may no tresor make redempcioun.
 Who clymbeth hiest, his fal is lowest down;
 A mene estat is best, who koude it knowe, 3436
 Tween hih presumyng & bowyng down to lowe.
 For who sit hiest, stant in iupartie,
 Vndir daunger off Fortune lik to fall:
 Myscheeff and pouert as for ther partie, 3440
 Be lowest brouht among these peeplis all.
 Summe folk han sugir, summe taste gall;
 Salamon therfore, merour off sapience,
 Tween gret richesse and atween indigence 3444
 3412. that] which that B. 3418. gretter] gret R.
 3420. Mihtili] Mihtly R. 3423. a staff R.
 3424. feblenesse R. 3425. hondis & feet R.
 3426. crossid] crossis R, J. 3429. foure] faire R.
 3431. 2nd al] om. H. 3432. is] may be R, J.
 3435. lowest] ferthest H, farthest R 3, fardest P — his] is R.
 3437. Tween] Berwene R. 3438. For] Or R.
 3439. of Fortune is repeated in R. 3442. folkes R.
 3443. therfore] ther of H. 3444. Tween] Bitwene R —
 richesse] richessis R — atween] bitwene R.

who grows to
be a man.

When age
comes he uses
a staff

and finally re-
turns with four
feet to the
earth from
which he
came."

There is no
defence against
nature. Who
climbs highest
has the lowest
fall.

Axed a mene callid suffisaunce,
 To holde hym content off competent dispenche,
 Nat to reioishe off to gret habundaunce,
 And ay in pouert to sende hym pacience,
 Sobre with his plente, in scarsete noon offence
 As off gruchchyng, but atwen ioie and smert
 Thanke God off all, and euer be glad off hert.

Therefore, as
 Solomon said,
 it is best to be
 neither too
 poor nor too
 rich,

3448

Erthe is the eende off eueri maner man;
 For the riche with gret possessioun
 Deieth as soone, as I reherse can,
 As doth the poore in tribulacioun:
 For deth ne maketh no dyuisioun
 Bî synguler fauour, but twen bothe iliche,
 Off the porest and hym that is most riche.

3452 for the end of
 all is earth,
 and Death
 shews favour
 to no man.

3456

This seid problem concludith in this cas,
 Which the serpent gan sleihtili purpose,
 That whan a child is first born, allas,
 Kynde to his dethward anon doth hym dispose;
 Ech day a iourne; ther is noon other glose;
 Experience can teche in eueri age,
 How this world heer is but a pilgrymage.

The moment a
 child is born he
 sets forth on a
 pilgrimage to-
 wards death.

3460

This said Edippus, first in Thebes born,
 Sent to a forest deuoured for to be,
 Founde & brouht foorth, as ye han herd toforn,
 And afftir*, drawyng hom to his contre,
 Slouh his fader, so infortunat was he
 Off froward happis folwyng al his lyue,
 As this tragedie his fortune shal descryue.

Œdipus was
 unfortunate
 during all his
 life.

3468

But for that he thoruh his hih prudence
 Onto the serpent declared euerideel,
 He slouh hym afftir be myhti violence,
 Mor bi wisdom than armure maad off steel, —
 Stace off Thebes can telle you ful weel, —

After he slew
 the Sphinx,

3472

3476

3446. dispenche] expence R.

3449. scarsete] scarsnesse R, J, scarceenes P, scarsenes H 5 —
 in] om. H 5.

3450. but atwen] both betwene R.

3457. twen] betwene R. 3458. and] & off R.

3459. concludid R.

3460. began R — sleihtili] sleihty to R. 3463. glose] chose R.

3464. can] gan R. 3466. said] om. H.

3469. afftir] afftirward B, H, R 3.

3472. shal] doth H, can R 3. 3475. myhti] knyhtly R.

3476. than armure, etc.] than of armure & of steele R.

Which was o cause, yiff ye list to seen,
Wherthoruh Edippus weddid hath the queen

he took his
mother, Jocasta,
to wife.

Callid Iocasta, pryncesse off that cite, 3480

His owne mooder, onknowe to hem bothe.

And thouh she were riht fair vpon to see,
With this mariage the goddis were ful wrothe;

For ther alliaunce nature gan to lothe, 3484

That a mooder, as ye shal vndirstonde,

Sholde take hir sone to been hir husbonde.

Some evil influ-
ence of the stars
must have been
the cause of
this unnatural
marriage.

There was theryn no conveyence,

[p. 44]

To be supportid be kynde nor be resoun,

3488

But yiff so be the heuenli influence

Disposid it be thyclynacioun

Off sum fals froward constellacioun,

Causid bi Saturne, or Mars the froward sterre, 3492

Tengendre debat or sum mortal werre.

In this mateer, pleyn[li] thus I deeme

Off no cunzyng but off opynyoun:

Thouh he wer crownyd with sceptre & diademe 3496

To regne in Thebes the stronge myhti toun,

That sum aspect cam from heuene doun,

Infortunat, froward and ful off rage,

Which ageyn kynde deynd this mariage. 3500

Two sons were
born to them,
Eteocles and
Polynices, and
two daughters,
Antigone and
Ismene.

He crownyd was bassent off al the toun,

Flouryng a seson be souereynte off pes;

And whil he heeld[e] theer possessioun,

Sones & douhtres he hadde dout[e]les: 3504

The firste sone callid Ethiocles,

Pollynyces callid was the tothir,

As seith Bochas, the seconde brothir.

Also he hadde goodli douhtren tweyne, 3508

The eldest callid was Antigone,

And the seconde named was Ymeyne;

Bothe thei wern riht fair vpon to see:

The queen Iocasta myhte no gladdere be, 3512

3481. vnknawen R. 3483. this] his H.

3487. no] none R. 3488. nor] no R.

3489. so] it so R — the] that R. 3490. Dispose R.

3494. pleyn R. 3500. deynd] denyed H 5, disposid P.

3503. theer] the R.

3506. Pollicynes R, Polymyces H — was callid H.

3510. And] om. R.

3511. Bothe] And both R — riht fair] om. R — vpon] on R.

Than to remembre, whan thei wex in age,
How goddis hadde encreced her lynage.

It was hir ioie and hir felicitye
To seen hir childre, that were so inli faire: 3516
But ofte in ioie ther cometh aduersite,
And hope onsured whan hope doth ofte appaire;
Contrarious trust will gladli ther repaire
Wher fals[e] wenyng in hertis is conceyued 3520
Thoruh ignoraunce, which fele folk* hath deceyued.

Jocasta
rejoiced
in her
children;

What thyng in erthe is more deceyuable,
Than whan a man supposith verrailly
In prosperite for to stonde stable, 3524
And from his ioie is remeued sodenly?
For wher Fortune is founde to hasty
To trise folk, is greuous to endure,
For sodeyn chaungis been hatful to nature. 3528

but what
thing is more
deceitful
than
Fortune?

Vnwar wo that cometh on gladnesse,
Is onto hertis riht passyng encombrous;
And who hath felt his part off welfulnesse,
Sorwe suyng oon is to hym odious. 3532
And werst off all and most contrarious,
Is whan estatys, hiest off renoun,
Been from ther noblesse sodenli put down.

The greatest
sorrow is
that which
comes
unawares
after joy.

There is no glory which that shyneth heer, 3536
That fals Fortune can so magnifie;
But whan his laude brihtest is and cleer,
She can eclipse it with sum cloudy skie
Off vnwar sorwe, onli off envie. 3540
Seeth off Edippus an open euydence,
Which bi his lyue hadde experience

There is
no glory
that Fortune
cannot eclipse.

Off hih noblesse, and therwith also
Part inportable off gret aduersite. 3544
Is ioie ay meynt with ful mortal wo:
For whil he regned in Thebes his cite,

3514. How] Heer R.

3516. children R.

3518. whan hope, *separated into two words in J, R 3, P; whan in whan hope is corrected to wan, R, whanne H 5 — doth] om. J.*

3519. will] wol H. 3520. hert R. 3521. folk fele B.

3527. trise] tryuse H. 3531. wilfulnesse R.

3535. put] brouht R. 3542. Which] Whilk H.

3545. ay] euer R. 3546. his] the R.

The land was
visited by a
pestilence,

And Iocasta, with ful gret royalte,
Withynne the contre ther fill a pestilence, 3548
The people infectyng with his violence

Thoruh al the land and al the regioun
In eueri age; but most greuouoli
On hem echon that were[n] off the tou[n] 3552
Thenfeccioun spradde most speciali.
And off vengau[n]ce the suerd most rigerousli
Day be day [be]gan to bite and kerue,
Off ech estat causyng folk to sterue. 3556

which brought
the people in
despair.

Thus gan encrece the mortalite,
That eueri man stood in iupartie
Off ther lyues thoruhout the contre,
So inportable was ther maladie. 3560
Men myhte heer the peeple clepe & crie,
Disespeired so were thei off ther lyues.
Void off al socour and off preseruatyues,

They asked the
gods and their
diviners why
they were so
punished.

Thei souhte out herbes & spices in ther coffres, 3564
And gan to seeke for helpe and for socours,
The cause enqueryng off prudent philisophres
And off ther moste expert dyuynours, —
Whi that the goddis with so sharpe shours 3568
Off pestilence, and in so cruel wise,
List hem, allas, so mortali chastise?

None could
answer save
Tiresias,

But among alle, in soth this is* the cas, [p. 45]
Ther was founde oon ful prudent and riht wis, 3572
A prophete callid Tiresias,
Off prophesie hauyng a souereyn pris,
Which that affermed and seide in his ays, —
As onto hym was shewid be myracle, 3576
Phebus hymselff declaryng the oracle, —

who told them
that the pesti-
lence would in-
crease until a
king, who slew
his father and
married his
own mother,
should be de-
posed.

Cause off this siknesse and these maladies,
As the goddis pley[n]li han disposid,
And Senek writ eek in his tragedies, 3580
Thouh the cause be secre and iclosid,
Onto the tyme ther be a kyng deposid,

3549. infectyng R.

3555. began] gan H, R. 3557. bigan to encrese R.

3561. That men myhten R. 3562. Dispeired R.

3563. 2nd off] off ther R. 3565. bi gan R.

3571. in soth this is] sothli this B, H. 3572. riht] om. R.

3578. these] of this R. 3580. eek] also R. 3581. secret R.

Which slouh his fader & reffte hym off his liff,
 And hath eek take his mooder to his wiff, 3584
 Til this be doon and execut in deede,
 Ther may be maad[e] no redempcioun;
 But pestilence shal multeplye & spreede
 Ay mor and mor thoruhout that regioun, 3588
 Til onto tyme that he be put down
 From his crowne, — which nat longe a-goon
 His fader slouh among his mortal foon,
 And hath his mooder weddid eek also, 3592
 A-geyn[es] lawe and a-geyn al riht.
 Til that vengau[n]ce vpon this crym be do,
 Ther shal be werre, pestilence and fiht,
 Sorwe and* gret striff, and euery maner wiht 3596
 Off vengau[n]ce his neyh[e]bour shal hate;
 Brother with brother, & blood with blood debate.
 This al and sum; ther may be no socour.
 Which brouht the peeple in ful gret heuynesse, 3600
 For Tiresia the grete dyuynour,
 Bi prophecie tolde hem thus expresse.
 And atte laste, bi toknys and wisesse,
 Men vndirstood be signes out shewyng, 3604
 This pestilence was brouht in bi the kyng.
 And thouh the peeple [ne] gaff no credence
 To Tiresia, nor to his prophesie,
 The queen Iocasta cauhte an euidence, 3608
 And in hir herte a ful gret fantasie,
 Speciali whan she dede espie
 Off kyng Edippus the feet whan she sauh woundid,
 How this rumour was vpon trouthe [I]groundid: 3612
 Because also there was a dyuynour
 Which tolde afforn Edippus sholde be
 To Layus in Thebes successour.
 Werbi the kyng, the queen, and the cite 3616
 Fill in gret trouble and gret aduersite, —
 Weel more than I be writyng can reporte,
 For ther was nothyng that myhte hem reconforte.

The people
 did not
 believe that
 Tiresias
 meant
 Œdipus, but

Jocasta
 suspected
 the truth.

She and
 Œdipus
 were greatly
 troubled.

3588. Ay] Euer R, J. 3589. onto] vnto the R.
 3592. eek] om. R, J. 3594. this] that R.
 3596. 1st and is crossed out B. 3600. ful] om. R.
 3604. be] and R. 3606. ne] om. H, P, R 3. 3607. nor] no R.
 3611. sauh] se R, sey H. 3612. groundid H, R.
 3614. afforn] to forn R. 3615. Thebes] thes R.
 3617. and] and in R. 3619. reconforte] comfort H.

Ful ofte a-day Iocasta gan to swowne, 3620
 Kyng Edippus sobbe, crie and weepe,
 In salt[e] teris as they wolde hem drowne,
 Deth craumpisshyng into ther brest gan creepe,
 A-day compleynyng, a-nyht they may nat sleepe, 3624
 Cursyng the hour off ther natyuyte,
 That thei sholde a-bide for to see

The king
 cast away
 his crown
 and tore out his
 eyes and cried
 day and night
 for death.

Ther mortal chauns, ther dedli auenture,
 Ther fortune also*, which gan on hem frowne, 3628
 Inpacient and doolful to endure,
 Ther froward fate with hir lookis browne.
 The kyng for ire cast a-wey his crowne,
 And gan tarace, for constreynt off his peyne, 3632
 Out off his hed his woful eyen tweyne.

Day and nyht he cried afftir deth,
 Hatful to come* in any manys siht,
 Most desirous to yelden vp the breth, 3636
 Woful in herte to come in any liht,
 Croked for sorwe, feeble to stonde vpriht;
 And speciali in his dedli distresse,
 For dreed & shame he dared in derknesse. 3640

What grieved
 him most was
 that his sons
 hated him,

The cruel constreynt off his most greuaunce
 Was that his sonys hadde hym in despiht,
 Which gan his sorwe gretli to auaunce,
 For hym to scorne was set al ther deliht; 3644
 Was neuer [man] that stood in a wers pliht.
 For thus liggyng and destitut off cheer,
 Onto the goddis he made this praier,

so he prayed
 the gods that
 Polynices and
 Eteocles might
 bring one an-
 other to de-
 struction.

Besechyng hem with a ful doolful herte 3648
 Vpon his wo to haue* compassioun,
 And that thei wolde, for tauenge his smerte,
 Atween his sonys make a dyuysioun,
 Ech to brynge other to destruccioun: 3652
 This was his praier playfli in substaunce,
 That ech on other take may vengauce

3620. a-day] in the day R. 3623. brest] hert R.
 3624. nat] noth R. 3625. Cursyng] Outraynge R.
 3628. also] eek B, H — gan] did R. 3630. lookis] lokkis R.
 3632. be gan R. 3635. come] comen B, J, comon R.
 3638. Croked] Corbide R. 3640. &] of H.
 3642. hadden hem R.
 3645. man is written between the columns in a later hand R.
 3646. thus] om. H, P.
 3649. to haue] ha sum B, haue sum J, haue some P.
 3653. pleynli] om. R. 3654. may take R.

- In yeeris fewe for ther onkynd[e]nesse. [p. 46]
 Thei herd his praier, as ye han herd deuyse; 3656 His prayer was answered.
 The brethre too, thoruh ther cursidnesse,
 Euerich gan other mortali despise,
 For lak off grace and for fals couetise,
 Ech for his parti desirous in deede 3660
 Toform other to regne and [to] succede.
 And thus this brethre* most infortunat,
 A-tween hemsilff fill at discencioun;
 And fynali this vnkynde[ly] debat 3664
 Brouht al Thebes onto destruccioun:
 Yit was ther first maad a convencioun,
 Bi entirchaungyng* that ech sholde regne a yeer,
 The tother absent, go pleie & come no neer. 3668
 This was concludid bi ther bothe assent
 And bi accord off al the regioun.
 Polynices rod foorth and was absent,
 Ethyocles took first possessioun. 3672
 But whan the yeer bi reuolucioun
 Was come a-boute, he, fals off his entent,
 Onto thaccord denyed to consent.
 This was o cause off ther bothe stryues, 3676
 Polynices thus put out off his riht.
 Til Adrastus, that kyng was* off Argyues,
 Which thoruh al Grece grettest was off myht, 3680
 Sente onto Thebes Tideus a knyht,
 His sone-in-lawe, to trete off this mateere,
 And the cause fynali to lere,
 Whethir the kyng callid Ethiocles
 Wolde condescende off trouthe and off resoun 3684
 To stynte werre and to cherisse pes,
 Affer thaccord and composicioun,
 Vp to delyuere Thebes the myhti tou

The brothers
became mortal
foes.

Adrastus, king
of Argos, sent
Tydeus to
Thebes to help
Polynices,

but without
avail.

3657. brethern R.

3662. brethre] breed B, brethern R, H 5, Brethir H.

3663. Betwene R. 3664. thus vnkinde P.

3666. made first R.

3667. Bentirchaungyng B — a yeer] eir R.

3668. go] to R, J, P, H 5.

3670. the] that R. 3673. But] & H.

3675. consent] assent R. 3678. was kyng B.

3681. off] for H.

3683. Whethir] Wher thoruh R — callid] om. R.

3687. Vp] for H, om. P — the] that P.

Onto his brother, which absent was withoute, 3688
Now that his yeer was fully come a-boute.

But he was fals, & frowardli gan varie,
Ethiocles, from his conuencioun.

Then Adrastus
began a war on
Eteocles in aid
of Polynices,
who had be-
come his son-
in-law.

For which Adrastus no lenger wolde tarie, 3692

Whan Tideus hadde maad relacioun;

But callid anoon throuhout his regioun

Alle worthi, bothe nyh and ferre,

A-geyn[es] Thebes for to gynne a werre. 3696

For this cause, lich as ye shal lere,

Polynices, to forsen his partie,

I-weddid hadde the kyngis douhter deere,

I meene Adrastus, flour of cheualrie,

Whan Tideus dede hym certefie

Touchyng the answeere off Ethiocles,

And off his trouthe how he was rech[e]les,

Fals off his promys & cursidli forsworn;

For to his trouthe noon aduertence had he,

Nor to thaccord that was maad befor

Touchyng delyueraunce off Thebes the cite.

But who that list this story cleerli see

Off these too brethre & ther discencioun,

And how Adrastus lay tofor the toun,

And Tideus, thoruh his hih prowesse,

Fauht bi the way[e] goyng on message,

And how off Grece al the worthynesse

With kyng Adrastus wente in this viage,

And off the myscheff that fill in ther passage

For lak of water, til that Ysiphile,

Norice of Ligurgus, so fair vpon to see,

Tauhte Tideus to fynde out a ryueer,

(She that dede in fairnesse so excell.)

Nor how the serpent, most ougli off his cheer,

Off kyng Ligurgus the child slow at a well,

Nor how Amphiorax fill a-doun to hell, —

You will find
the whole story
in the Siege of
Thebes.

3695. Alle] All the R. 3696. begynne R.
3698. Polycynes R. 3706. befor] to forne H.
3707. the delyueraunce R. 3709. brethern R.
3714. this] his R.
3720. Nor] Neyer R. 3721. a] the R.
3722. Nor] Neithir R.

- Al to declare, me semeth it is no neede,
 [For] in the siege of Thebes ye may it reede, 3724
 The stori hool, and maad ther menciouñ
 Off other parti, ther puissaunce & ther myht,
 And how Adrastus lay toforn the toun,
 And how thei metten eueri day in fiht, 3728
 And Tideus, the noble famous knyht
 So renommed in actis marciall,
 Was slayn, alas, as he fauht on the wall. Tydeus was
 slain,
 And how the brethre mette a-mong the pres, 3732
 Lich too tigres or leouns that were wood,
 With sharp[e] speris; this is dout[e]les,
 Euerich off hem shadde other[s] herte* blood:
 This was ther fyn, & thus with hem it stood, 3736
 Sauf at ther festis callid funerall,
 Ther fill a merueile which reherse I shall.
 Whan thei were brent into ashes dede, [p. 47] and on their
 Off ther envie there fill a [ful] gret wonder: 3740 the funeral pyre
 A-mong the brondes and the coles rede, the smokes
 Hih in the hair the smokes wente assonder, parted in
 The ton [to] oo parti and the tother yonder, twain.
 To declare, the story list nat feyne, 3744
 The grete hatrede that was atwen hem tweyne.
 Thus for ther ire and fals discencioun,
 Alle the lordis and al the cheualrie
 Were slayn off Grece and also off the toun. 3748
 And roote off all, myn auctour list nat lie,
 Was fals alliaunce and fraternal envie;
 And cheeff ground, with al the surplusage,
 Who serche a-riht, was onkyndli mariage. 3752
 The queen Iocasta felte hir part off payne
 To seen hir childre ech off hem slen other,
 Hir sone hir lord, blynd on his eyen tweyne,
 Which to his sonys was fader & eek brother: 3756
 Fortune wolde it sholde be noon other,

3723. semeth it is] sempte it was R.

3724. For] om. H, R 3 — the] thes R — it] om. R.

3726. other] eithir R — pouyschaunce R.

3732. brethern mettyn R. 3735. herte] hertis B.

3740. ful] om. H. 3743. to] om. H, on R 3.

3745. betwene R. 3746. ther] om. R — fals] for fals H.

3752. serche] seche H — serche a-riht] sekith right R 3.

3753. part] payne R. 3754. children R.

3756. eek] also R.

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Eek Parkas sustre, which been in noumbre thre,
Span so the threed at ther natyuyte.

Eek whan Iocasta stood thus disconsolat, 3760
And sauh off Thebes the subuersioun,
The contre stroied, wast and desolat,
The gentil blood shad off that regioun,
Withoute confort or consolacioun, 3764
Thouhte she myhte be no mor appeired;
But off al hope fulli disespeired,

slew herself
with *Œdipus*'
sword.

Trist and heuy, pensiff & spak no woord,
Hir sorwes olde & newe she gan aduerte, 3768
Took the swerd off hym that was hir lord,
With which Edippus smot Layus to the herte,
She to fynisshe all hir peynes smerte,
And fro the bodi hir soule to deuyde, 3772
Roff hir-selff[e] thoruhout eueri side.

She weri was off hir woful liff,
Seyng off Fortune the gret[e] frowardnesse,
How hir diffame & sclandre was so riff, 3776
And off Edippus the gret[e] wrechidnesse,
Eek off hir soness the gret onkynd[e]nesse:
Alle these thyngis weied on hir so sore,
For distresse that she list lyue no more. 3780

Sorrow caused
her beauty to
fade.

Bochas writith, the flour off hir fairnesse,
Constreynt off sorwe causid it to fade;
The famous liht also* off hir noblesse
And al the cleernesse off hir daies glade 3784
With vnwar harmys was so ouerlade,
Off verrai angwissh, that she hirselff dede hate,
So inli contrari [disposid] was hir fate.

Death takes no
heed of high
or low estate.

Thus deth deuoureth with his bittir gall 3788
Ioie and sorwe, deuoid off al mercy;
And with his darte he maketh doun to fall

3758. Eek] Also R — sustren H.
3759. the] ther H. 3760. Eek] Also R.
3761. sauh] sihe R. 3762. stroied] distried R.
3764. comfort H.
3768. Hir] His R — newe] ner R. 3773. eueri] eithir R.
3778. Eek] Also R. 3783. also] eek B, eke R 3, P, H.
3784. hir] his R. 3785. sche was R.
3787. disposid] om. H — hir] to hir H. 3788. his] hir H.
3789. deuoid] auoyde R. 3790. his] hir H — he] she H.

Riche and poore, hem markyng sodenly:
His vnwar strook smyt[eth] indifferently,
From hym refusyng fauour & al meede,
Off all estatis he takith so litil heede.

3792

Bet is to deie than lyue in wrechidnesse,
Bet is to deie than euer endure payne,
Bet is an eende than dedli heuynesse,
Bet is to deie than euer in wo compleyne;
And where-as myscheeff doth at folk disdeyne
Bi woful constraynt off long contynuaunce,
Bet is to deie than lyue in such greuaunce.

3796

But it is better
to die than live
in misery.

3800

Taketh exaample heerooff and a preeff
Off kyng Edippus, that was so longe a-go,
Off queen Iocasta, that felte so gret myscheeff,
And off ther childre remembrith eek also,
Which euer lyued in envie, sorwe* & wo:
Fortune, allas, duryng al ther daies
Was founde so froward to hem at all assaies.

3804

3808

Touchyng Edippus processe fynde I noon
What eende he made in conclusioun,
Sauf Bochas writith, how the kyng Creon,
Cosyn and heir bi successioun,
Exilid hym cheyned ferr out off the toun,
Where he endured in myscheeff, sorwe & dreed,
Till Antropos ontwynid his lyuis threed.

3812

Creon exiled
Edipus, and I
cannot say how
he died.

¶ Lenvoye.

IN this tragedie foure thinges ye may see,
The pride off Iabyn & fals *presumpcioun*,
Off queen Iocasta the gret aduersite,
Off kyng Edippus thynclynacioun
To vices all, and the deuysioun
Off the too brethre, pleykli vs tassure,
Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

3816

Kingdoms dis-
tracted by in-
ternal strife
cannot endure.

3820

3791. markyng] makyng R. 3792. His] hir H — smyteth]
smyt MSS. *except* P, H 5. 3793. hym] hir H. 3794. he]
she H.
3795-8, 3801. R, P, H 5 *write* Bettir or Better *instead of* Bet.
3796. endure] tendure H, to liff (liue) in R, P, H 5, lyue in J,
to suffre R 3. 3799. at] al R.
3805. remembrith eek] remembre R.
3806. lyued in envie sorwe] lyueden in sorwe envie B, H —
lyuede euer R 3.
3813. hym] om. H 3814. in] om. R. 3816. foure] thre R.

[*Omne Regnum
in se diuisum
desolabitur.*]¹

There must
be peace and
justice,

as is shewn
by the example
of Thebes.

Princes and
Princesses,
cherish your
subjects if you
would reign
long.

For who sauh euer kyngdam or contre

[p. 48]

Stonde in quyeet off ther possessioun,

3824

But yiff ther wer pes, riht and equyte

And iust accord, withoute discencioun,

Void off ontrouthe and fals collusioun,

Pleyntli declaryng bexauple & bi scripture,

3828

Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

Seeth heer exauple off Thebes the cite,

And how that noble myhti region,

Thoruh ther* froward [fals] duplicite

3832

With were brouht to ther destruccion;

Ther promys brokyn, and ther couert tresoun,

Shewed bi the[r] harmys, impossible to recure,

Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

3836

Pryncis, Pryncessis, which han the souereynte

Ouer the peeples and domynacioun,

Yiff ye list lyue longe in felice,

Cherisshith your subiectis, doth noon extorsioun, 3840

And aduertisith off wisdam and resoun,

As this tragedie doth to you discure,

Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

[How Atreus Kyng of Messene wrou3t ayenst his
brothir Thiestes / slouh. his iij. childre dis-
membrid hem in pecys made Thiestes to ete of
ther flessch and drynke of ther blood.]¹

Bochas was
preparing to
write the story
of Duke The-
seus,

BOCHAS the poete, auctour off this book,

3844

Hym purposyng to-gidre to compile

Dyuers stories, anon his penne he took,

Hym remembryng withynne a litil while,

In this chapitle gan direct* his stile

3848

To write the story, and be compendious,

Afforn all othre off Duk. Theseus,

Lord off Athenys, a famous gret cite,

Ryht strong and myhti vpon euery side, —

3852

But at his bak Bochas dede oon see,

3825. pes riht] rith pees R. 3828. bi ensauple R.

3830. ensauple R. 3832. ther] ther most B, H — fals] om. H.

3833. brouht] weren brouht R. 3835. ther] the H.

3837. han] had R.

3839. long lyue J — felice] prosperite H. 3842. As] al H.

3848. gan] bigan R — directen B. 3851. Athenys] Asye H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 20 verso.

Which cried loude & bad he sholde a-bide:
 "Bochas," quod he, "fro the me list nat hide
 My woful cas, nor in no wise spare
 My pitous compleynt to the to declare!

when suddenly
 Thyestes, son
 of Pelops, ap-
 peared before
 him and said,

3856

I am Thiestes, be-spreynt al with wepyng,
 Drownyd in teris, as thou maist weel see,
 Whilom sone off the myhti kyng
 Philistynes, and born also parde
 Off queen Pellopia, excellyng off beute;
 And for thou art desirous for tendite
 Off peple onhappi, & ther wo to write,

3860

3864

My will is this, that thou anon proceede
 To turne thi stile, and tak thi penne blyue,
 Leue* Theseus, tak now off hym non heede,
 But my tragedie first that thou descryue.
 For I suppose that in al thi lyue,
 That thou sauh neuer a thyng mor dolerous,
 Mor onhappi, mor froward nor pitous

3868

"Leave
 Theseus and tell
 my tragedy
 first. Never
 was there one
 more terrible."

Than is, allas, my mortal auenture,
 Incomparable, the sorwe surmountyng
 Off queen Iocasta, most woful creature,
 Or off Edippus, his fate ay compleynyng:
 For my compleynt haueth non endyng,
 But lastith euere, & bereth me wisesse,
 No wo rassemblith onto myn heuynesse."

3872

3876

And with that woord John Bochar stille stood,
 Ful sobirly to yiue hym audience;

3880

So Bochas
 paused to
 listen.

And in the place demourli he a-bod
 To heere the substaunce off his mortal offence,
 Which thus began to shewen his sentence.
 "O Iohn," quod he, "I pray the take good heed"
 My wo to write that men may it reed.

3884

Allas! my brother, roote off onkynd[e]nesse,
 Attreus callid, off tresoun sours & well,
 And fyndere out off tresoun & falsnesse,

3888

"John," said
 Thyestes, "my
 brother Atreus
 was a great
 scoundrel,

3860. Whilom] Sumtyme R — sone] þe sone H.

3863. for] om. R.

3865. that thou anon] anone at thou do R.

3867. Leue] Leff B — now] om. R.

3868. that] at R. 3870. sih R. 3871. nor] neithir R.

3875. ay] euer R. 3876. haueth] hath R, H.

3877. euere] om H.

3883. his] the R.

- And all other in fraude doth precell,
Whos couert hate is more than I can tell —
I supposyng, off verray innocence,
In hym no malice, deceit, nor offence, 3892
- but I trusted him as a brother should. But as a brother sholde his brother triste,
I trusted hym off herte, will & thouht;
Bi apparence non othir cause I wiste,
For in his persone I supposid nouht 3896
That euer he koude so fals a thyng ha wrouht.
But who may soner a-nother man deceyue,
Than he in whom no malice men conceyue?
- I knew no wrong in him. I dempte off hym as off my trewe brother, 3900
Wenyng he hadde feithful been to me;
I sauh no signe, nor I kneuh non other,
In hym supposyng no duplicite. 3904
But, o allas, how myhte it euer be,
Or who dede euer in any story fynde
Blood onto blood to be so onkynde!
- There is no need of my telling you about the great worth and nobility of our ancestors. I will passe ouer to telle the worthynesse, [p. 49]
Touchyng thestatis off our progenytours, 3908
Off our kynreede, and the gret noblesse,
I telle no thyng, nor off our predecessours,
Nor off my youthe how passid been the flours—
I leue al this, and onto mynde call 3912
The wrechidnesse that I am in fall.
- My brother falsely accused me of corrupting his wife's virtue, exiled me from our country and tried to kill me. My brothir fond a fals occasioun
A-geyn[e]s me, and gan a cause feyne
To ban[y]she me out off our regioun, 3916
And gan at me off hatrede so disdeyne,
Vpon me affermyng in certeyne,
In our kyngdam, which callid is Missene,
I sholde haue ley[e]n bi his wiff the queene. 3920
- This he compassid ful falsli off malis,
Hymself weel knowyng that it was nat so,
Ay founde onkynde, and in his auy

3889. doth] he dothe H 5, P — precell] excelle R.

3892. nor] ne non R, nor noon H 5, J. 3893. his] a R.

3895. Bi] For by H.

3902.] I see nothyng neithir I knowe non othir R.

3910. nor] nethir R, neither P, H 5. 3912. onto] to R.

3915. began R. 3917. bi gan R.

3920. I sholde] In shuld R. 3922. nat] no R.

3923. Ay] Euere R.

- Nat lik my brother, but my dedli fo; 3924
 And to encrece gret parcell off my wo,
 Bi long processe in his entencioun
 He ymagined my destruccioun.
- And his cheeff cause was fals[e] couetise, 3928 because he
 Touchyng this thyng which he dede on me feyne; wanted the en-
 And yit this kyngdam, treuli to deuise, tire kingdom
 Shold haue be partid of riht atwen vs tweyne: for himself.
- But a-geyn trouthe he dede so ordeyne 3932
 Me to exile* out off that regioun,
 Hymself allone to haue possessioun.
- Yit in his herte he caste a-nother wile 3936
 To myn ondoynge and desolacioun: Afterwards he
 To the place where he me dede exile, pretended re-
 Vnder a shadwe off fals collusioun pentance,
- To make a maner reuocacioun, 3940
 Off brethirheed shewyng a pretense,
 Me to resorte a-geyn to his presence,
- To be accepted, as a brother sholde, 3944 and were made up
 With ful accord stille with hym tabide, our differences,
 All iniuries, off which afforn I tolde,
 On outhir part forgete & set a-side,
 That nothyng afftir sholde our loue deuyde;
 But of oon will and oon entencioun
- Leede al our liff withoute dyuysioun. 3948
- Wheroff the peeples was ful glad and liht 3952
 Thoruhout Missene the myhti regioun,
 At my resortyng fyndyng euery wiht
 Redi off herte and hool affeccoun
 Me to receyue into that noble toun;
 And noon so redy, bi signes out shewyng,
 To make me cheer, in soth, as was the kyng.
- There is no damage in comparisoun, 3956
 That may be likned, bi no rassemblaunce,
 To feyned trouthe and symulacioun, There is noth-
 ing worse than
 fraud hid under
 an honest face,

3924. but] bud lik R.

3928. This and the next two stanzas are transposed with the following four in R.

3931. departid R — of riht] trewly H.

3933. exile] besile B, R, J, besyle H 5 (exile H, P, R 3).

3937. did me R. 3940. he shewyng H. 3944. toforne H.

3945. partye R — forgot H. 3947. all off oo will R.

3949. was] were R — J, P om. the four following stanzas.

3950. the] that R. 3953. receyue] resorte R.

- Whan fraude is hid with a fair contenaunce,
 Pretendyng trouthe outward bi disseyuauunce, 3960
 And vndirnethe, off most fals entent,
 Off doubilnesse darith the serpent.
 As vnder floures is shroudid the dragoun,
 For to betraisshe bi sodeyn violence 3964
 Such folk as haue no suspeciuon,
 But treuli meene in ther peur innocence,
 Til thei be cauht dispurueied off diffence,
 As is a fissh with bait off fals plesaunce, 3968
 The hook nat seyn, to brynge hym to myschaunce.
 Thus semblabli, at myn hom comyng
 I was receyued with eueri circumstaunce,
 Lich as halff heir and brother to the kyng; 3972
 And he, pretendyng, as bi contenaunce,
 That he hadde so inli gret plesaunce
 Off my repair, off* trouthe he tolde so,
 For, reioisshyng, saide he wolde go 3976
 Onto his goddis to doon sum obseruaunce
 For this accord, and humble sacrefise,
 Made his mynystres with feithful attendaunce
 Tawaite on me in al ther beste wise; 3980
 It nedith nat to tellyn nor deuise,
 Nor in wrytyng in bookis for to sette
 Halff the ioie he made whan we mette.
 First how freendli he dede me embrace 3984
 Off hertli gladnesse withynne his armis tweyne,
 And how for ioie the teris on his face
 Ful entierli gan doun distill & reyne,
 That, for my part, I koude me nat restreyne, 3988
 But that I muste off frenshipec fraternall
 Weepe as dede he in his estat roiall.
 The wili wolff that cast hym to deuoure [p. 50]
 The celi lamb, which can no diffence, 3992
 Nor non helpe hymselfen to socoure,
 So feeble he is to make resistance,
 Which demeth trouthe off fals apparence —
 What wonder ist the fraude nat conceyued, 3996
 Thowh such lambes onwarli be deceyued?
3964. be trousse R. 3975. off] & off B, H.
 3980. Tawaite] To wate R. 3981. nor] ne R.
 3982. Nor] Neithir R — in] bi R.
 3984. embrace H. 3988. partie R.
 3992. no] non R, noon J. 3993. Nor] Ne R — hym silff R.

like a snake
beneath flowers.

Thus I came
home. My
brother acted
as if he were
overwhelmed
with joy,

and we em-
braced one an-
other weeping.

Innocent lambs
are easily
tricked.

- Thouh that roses at mydsomer be ful soote,
 Yit vndirnethe is hid a ful sharp spyne;
 Summe fressh[e] floures han a ful bittir roote, 4000
 And lothsum gall can sugre eek vndermyne;
 In dreedful stormys the sonne among doth shyne,
 And vnder a shadwe off feyned freendliheed,
 Ther is no frenship so pereilous for to dreed. 4004
 Thus remembryng the feithful woordis stable
 Off my brother shewed onto me,
 At our meetyng the kyssyng amyable,
 Thassurid couenantis off our fraternite — 4008
 But ofte tyme men may beholde and see
 That lelis growe among these netlis thikke,
 And flourdelis amyde these weedie wikke.
 Thus whil I restid in the kyngis hous,
 Nothyng aduertying his dedli cruelte,
 His olde hatreed was so venymous
 And so odible to destroie me,
 Hymself tauenge he took my childre thre, 4016
 And secreli — is it nat a wonder? —
 He kutte her throttes with a knyf assonder.
 For he thouhte that it dede hym good
 Hem to dismembre into pecis smale, 4020
 And in a vessel for to gadre ther blood,
 Whil thei lay still & loked on hym* ful pale.
 This was his deede in a desert vale,
 Withynne a kaue, that no man sholde espie 4024
 Tresoun conspired off his fals tirannye.
 This was the substaunce off his sacrefise,
 To sle my childre & do ther throtis bleede!
 I trowe the goddis theroff dede agrise,
 Off his fals offryng whan thei token heede. 4028
 He dede ther membris afftir roste & seede,
 And with this viaunde most abhomynable
 He made me be serued at the table. 4032

Midsummer
 roses are
 fragrant, but
 there are sharp
 thorns beneath.

No friendship
 is more danger-
 ous than one
 that is feigned.

4012 While I dwelt
 in my brother's
 house, suspect-
 ing nothing, he
 cut the throats
 of my three
 children,
 4016 dismembered
 them,

4028 and had them
 roasted and
 served up to
 me at table.

3998. Thofe be Roos R 3 — that] the P.

4001. sugre eek] al so suger R, J.

4011. amyde] in myddis R, J, H 5, among H, amonge R 3 —
 weedis] wides J.

4017. secreli] sikyrly R — it is not R.

4022. &] om. H — hym] hem B — ful] om. R, J, P, H 5.

4027. do ther throtis] make ther hertis R, J, H 5.

4032. me be serued] be seruyd me H.

I am sure the
gods were dis-
pleased. Even
the sun was
so horrified
that he
shrouded
his light.

In couert cruses, also thus it stood,
To staunche my thrust, thoruh his cruel vengauunce
He made me vnknowe to drynke ther blood.
Was nat this thyng to goddis displeaunce? 4036
Yis, I dar sey[e]n; for bi demonstraunce,
Vpon this deede, withoute mor obstacle,
The sonne in heuene shewed a myracle.

Which sore agrisid* myht[e] nat beholde 4040
With his bemys theron to caste his siht,
For displeaunce his clernesse gan withholde,
And for vengauunce to withdrawe his liht,
The day turnyng for horroure onto nyht, 4044
Whan he shon brihdest in his mydday speer,
Shrowded his face and wolde nat appeer.

Unwittingly I
ate my children
and drank
their blood,
which grieues
me so that I
can hardly
speak of it.

But I, allas, vpon this cas horrible,
That koude nat ymagyne nouthur thynte 4048
On ony mater that was so odible,
Eet off ther flessch & off ther blood dede drynke,
Which so sore doth in myn herte synke,
That I may nat, touchyng this auenture, 4052
The circumstaunces for constreynt to discure.

Bochas, did
you ever hear
of a more un-
happy man?

It nedith me nat to make rehersaile
Touchyng myn exil, off alle maner thynges,
Off dyuers sorwes that me dede assaile, 4056
My woful sihhes, nor my greuouse wepynges,
Nor vpon nyhtes my dolorous wakynges,
My pouert[e], nor how I stood in dreed
To lese my liffe; wheroff, Bochas, tak heed, 4060

And remembre alle [the] circumstaunces:
Yiff euer thou sauh, off hih or low degre,
Mor contrari or mor onhappi chaunces,
Than thou herd remembrid heer off me. 4064
Weie in ballaunce my sorwes, and lat see
Yiff any sorwe or myscheuys onrecurid
May countirpeise to that I haue endurid!

4035. to] *om.* R.

4037. demonstracion R.

4040. sore agrisid] for agrisid B, H, R 3 — myhtnat B.

4042. bi gan R. 4048. nethir R.

4050. &] *om.* R — dede] also did I R. 4051. in] too R.

4053. circumstaunce R — to] *om.* R. 4057. nor] ne R.

4058, 9. Nor] Neithir R.

4061. the] *om.* H, R 3 — circumstaunce H 5, syrcumstaunce P.

4063. chaunce P, H 5. 4066. mischeeff R.

Myn infortunyes, I fond hem ay so fell, 4068
 Withoute fauour & socour dispurueied,
 My brother euer on me so cruell,
 That I ful offte desired to haue deied;
 For to this day my sperit hath be conueied 4072
 With sorwe and wo, deuoid off al refuge,
 Wherefore I pray, O Bochas be my iuge,
 And in thi writyng leff me nat behynde, [p. 51] You must not
 Nor in thi book[e] that thou nat disdeyne 4076 leave me out
 Among tho folk that thou ha[ue] me in mynde, of your book
 Which that for sorwe weepe, waile & pleyne." of tragedies."
 And thus Thiestes, rehersyng al his peyne,
 Lich as he wolde hymself on pecis reende, 4080
 Maad onto Bochas off his tale an eende.

[How Atreus accusid himsilf of mordre and his
brothir vpon auoutry don with Europa the
quene.]¹

ATREUS afftir, with a ful pale cheer,
 And off envie ful ded in his visage,
 Onto Iohn Bochas gan* approche neer, 4084
 Lich as he hadde be fallen in a rage,
 And furiously abraid in his langage,
 "How may this be, that lik a man wer wood,
 Thiestes hath his venym sowe a-brod, 4088
 And lik a rebaude falsli me accusid,
 Nat-withstandyng that I ful cleerli see
 Myn infortunyes, which may nat be refusid,
 So sore, allas, thei werke ageyn[e]s me! 4092
 And thouh Thiestes fals & ontrew be,
 And to the, Bochas, with a face pale
 Ageyn[e]s me hath forged heer a tale
 Which in effect shal be founde ontrew be, 4096
 Yiff I ha[ue] space my compleynt to declare.
 For I purpose to telle a tale newe
 Fro poynt to poynt, & for no man to spare,

At this, Atreus
appeared, pale
with anger,
and said:
"Thyestes
lies like the
ribald and
madman he is,

and you, too,
Bochas, are
telling tales
about me.

4076. Nor] Neithir R.

4084. gan] he gan B, H, P, R 3, began J, byganne H 5 — he
began to proche R — approche] to approche H 5.

4087. wer] most R 3.

4091. which þat R. 4094. to] vnto R.

¹MS. J. leaf 22 recto.

The truth is,
that Thyestes
was the cause
of all my mis-
fortunes.

How he was roote & ground off al my care,
And euene lik as it is befall
Reherse the gynnyng off my sorwes all. 4100

Whilom whan I regned in Messene,
Off age lusti, flouryng in my fresshnesse,
With my wyff Europa, that was queene,
Most renommed that tyme off hir fairnesse,
Thiestes thanne, ground off al falsnesse,
As a traitour his tyme dede espie, 4104
Thoruh his fals fraude & his flat[e]rie 4108

He corrupted
Europa my
wife by his
fraud and flat-
tery, an intoler-
able thing to
do, and an
abomination
to the gods,

Compassid a mene withynne my cite
Bi slehti wilis that were incomparable,
To corrupte my wyuys chastite, 4112
Mi bed defoulyng, a thyng intollerable,
And to the goddis verray abhomynable —
Vsyng the queen to his flessfli plesaunce,
Til onto tyme that bi continuaunce 4116

and had two
or three sons
by her, which
I thought my
own. After-
wards this swine
had 2 son,
Egisthus, by
his own
daughter.

She bi hym hadde sonys too or thre,
Echon brouht forth in fals auout[e]rye.
Deemyng euer that thei hadde be
Myn owne childre, til that I dede espie, 4120
How that this swyn thoruh his fals lecherie,*
This Thiestes, afftir Europa,
Lay bi his douhter callid Pellopia.

And bi processe foorth a child she brouhte,
Callid Egistus, which whan he cam to age,
As seith Bochas, ful gret tresoun he wrouhte;
For bi his malice and his gret outrage
Destroied was al hooli the lynage 4128
Off Tantalus, which bi his lyuyng
In Frigia regned as lord and kyng.

They cast
Egisthus out
to wild beasts,
to prevent
scandal;

But this Egistus, off whom I spak afforn,
Falsli begote, myn auctour writ the same, 4132
Off Pellopia, anon as he was born,
To hide the sclaudre & also the diffame
Off Thiestes, and for to saue his name,

4102. begynnyng R.

4103. Whilom] Summe tyme R — Misseene H.

4104. my] om. H. 4106. hir] om. R. 4107. as grounde R.

4108. dede espie] asprie R. 4115. to] om. R.

4119. euer] om. R, H. 4120. children R.

4121. lecherie] trecherie B. 4125. he] þat he R.

4131. to forn R. 4132. wryteth R.

- Whan that he was but a day off age,
 He was out cast to beestis ful sauage 4136
- To be deuoured, the story is weel kouth.
 A mylch[e] goot God list for hym prouyde,
 To fostren hym in his tendre youth, 4140
 He day & nyht liggyng bi hir side.
 Withynne the forest thus he dede abide
 Onto tyme that he gan growe in age;
 Thanne to the court he holdeth his passage, 4144
- As onknowe to eueri maner wiht,
 Wher he herde, abidyng in houshold,
 Off his kenreede, & how, ageyn al riht,
 Thiestes was presumptuous and bold, 4148
 Bi his deceytis* compassid manyfold,
 With Europa my wiff to haue a-do,
 And on Pelopia begat a child also,
- Which was hymself, as he dede vndirstonde 4152
 Bi euydencis many mo than on.
 Wherefore off malice he took on honde,
 On me, his vncle, tauengid been anon.
 For Thiestes, cheuest off all my fon, 4156
 Myn owne brothir, made Egistus blyue
 To make a suerd thoruhout myn herte ryue.
- Thus bi this moordre, conspired bi tresoun, [p. 52]
 On me Atreus, liggyng pale and ded, 4160
 Cam Thiestes to haue* possessioun,
 And sette a crowne oniustli on his hed.
 He nouthir hadde conscience nor dreed,
 Routhes to see my woundis bleede, 4164
 With this that he myhte in my land succede.
- This same Egistus, ful falsli in his liff,
 As a yong braunche spronge out off tresoun,
 Lay bi Clymestra, which that was the wiff 4168
 Off the noble worthi kyng Agamenoun,
 Liggyng a-siege toffor Troie toun.
 And this Egistus, which is a thyng nat fair,
 Moordred hym also in Grece at his repair. 4172

but he was
 fostered by a
 goat and grew
 up and came
 to my court,
 where he
 learned who his
 parents were.

Incited by
 Thyestes, he
 ran a sword
 through my
 heart.

Thus Thyestes
 became king.

Egistus after-
 wards was the
 paramour of
 Clytemnestra,
 and murdered
 Agamemnon.

4139. mylke H, R 3 — prouyde] purueie R.

4141. He] by H — nyht & day R.

4145. *This and the next three stanzas are om. in R, J.*

4149. deceytes] desertis B. 4156. cheuest] cheff H, chefe R 3.

4158. ryue] arrive H. 4161. han B.

Which story,
Bochas, is most
terrible, that of
Œdipus, of
Jocasta, or
mine?

Wherefore, O Bochas, off herte I pray[e] the,
Which off these stories is now most terrible? —
Off Edippus, Iocasta, or off me?
Telle on anon, yiff it be possible,
Which off ther* sorwes is founde most penyble,
Off Theban brethre, most ful off wo & teene,
Or off vs tweyne brethern off Missene?

4176

I admit I
roasted Thyestes'
children,
but he begot
them on Europa,
my wife; and
although murder
and treason are
hateful, he
wronged me
first.

I am a-knowe, as for my partie,
Off vengauce I dede a cruel deede:
I slouh his childre off malice & envie
And rosted hem, whan that thei wer dede,
Onli because, yiff thou list take heede,
That he begat hem, as roote off al this striff,
Vpon Europa, which that was my wiff.

4180

Such hatful thyngis echman sholde lothe,
Which appertene to moordre and to tresoun:
Thus may I seyn, we been vnhappi bothe,
He first bi trespass off fornycacioun
Doon bi the queen withynne my regioun,
And I, disclaundrid, on the tóthir side,
Off hasti vengauce to been an homycide.

4188

4192

It was tip for
tap,

My bed he fouled bi his auoutrie,
To God & man a thyng most detestable;
And I off malice and fals malencolie
Slouh his childre & serued hem atte table.
Thus entirchaungyng, yiff it be comendable,
Ech was desirous, thoruh our vnhappi chaunce,
Vpon other for to do vengauce.

4196

4200

and Seneca
tells all about
us in his
tragedies."

Our gret hatreede, most odious founde att all,
Our cruel deedis wrouht on outhir side,
Senech rehearsith hem in especiall
In his tragedies; and ther he doth deuyde
Our compleyntis, our málíce & our pride,
Our fatal eende in sorwe & myscheff fyned,
Whan Antropos our lyuys threed hath twyned."

4204

4174. now] *om.* R, J.

4177. ther] these B — founde] *om.* J, R, H 5 — sorwes] stories
R 3.

4178. brethern R. 4179. Mycene P. 4180. for] *om.* R.

4182. &] & of R. 4184. bi cause repeated in R.

4188. 2nd to] *om.* R. 4190. He] The R.

4194. he fouled] defouild R.

4206. fyned] feyned R.

Whan Iohn Bochas fulli hadde espied
 Off these too brethre thaccusaciouns,
 And how thei hadde maliciousli replied
 Ech ageyn other in ther discenciouns,
 He gan dulle to heere ther mocions,
 Put vp his penne, & wrot nat mor a woord
 Off the[r] furie nor off ther fals discord.

4208 After hearing
 the stories of
 these two
 brothers,
 Bochas put
 away
 his pen and
 refused to write
 4212 another word
 about them.

[Lenvoy.]

THIS tragedie sheweth a figure,
 A maner ymage & also a liknesse,
 How contrari it is onto nature,
 Blood onto blood to shewe onkynd[e]nesse.
 This woful story can ber [ful] weel witenesse,
 All such debatis been, as ye shal fynde,
 Hatful to God and contrary onto kynde.

4216 This tragedie
 shews how
 hateful
 brotherly
 strife is to
 God and
 Nature.

For there is non mor dreedful auenture,
 Than in kynredis to fynde frowardnesse,
 Nor no damage mor pereilous to endure,
 Than in frenshepes whan there is straungenesse
 A maner parti; bexauple I dar expresse,
 To seen the tre debate ageyn the rynde,
 To God were hatful and contrary onto kynde.

4220

Nothing is
 more dreadful
 than enmity
 4224 between
 relations.

Eueri beeste and eueri creature
 Loueth his semblable, off kyndli riht, I gesse;
 And whan on trouthe* tweyne hertis assure,
 Vndepartid, off verray parfinesse,
 It were a vicious froward cursidnesse,
 Ther loue so knet, to losne it or onbynde,
 Hatful to God and contrari onto kynde.

4228

Every living
 creature loves
 his fellow of
 natural right.
 4232 It were a
 vicious deed to
 make them
 quarrel.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, doth your besi cure
 Fro you tauoide striff, fraude & doubilnesse,
 Remembrith you vpon thunhappi eure
 Off these too brethre & off ther wrechidnesse,
 And off ther bothe malicious wilfulnesse,
 And how ther stryues — hath this weel in mynde —
 To God was hatful and contrary onto kynde.

4236

Princes and
 Princesses, try
 to avoid
 strife, fraud,
 and deceit;
 such things
 are very
 4240 hateful
 to God.

4208. had fully H. 4212. began R — ther] the R.
 4213. nat] no R, H, R 3.
 4214. nor] neither R.
 4219. ful weel] om. P. 4220. as] om. H.
 4225. Frenshippe R. 4227. ayenst R.
 4231. ontrithe B. 4234. losne it] louse R.
 4238. Remembre R — eure] cure R. 4241. haveth R.

[Off Duk Theseus and Adriane pat saued his liff
in the Caue/ and how he lik a forsworn man
forsook hir and weddid faire Phedra/ whiche
aftirward slouh hirsilf.]¹

Athens was
once called the
nurse of phi-
losophers and
sun of all
sciences.

ATHENES whilom, whan it was in his
floures, [p. 53]

Was callid norice of philisophres wise, 4244
Princesse off poetis & expert oratoures,
Sonne off all sciences, as clerkis can deuise,
Whens al cunnyng most cleerli dede arise,
Named off Grece the lanterne and the liht, 4248
Which thoruh al erthe shadde his beemys briht.

Its renown
shone in every
land,

With noble titles, which been out off noumbre,
In eueri coost his renoun dede shyne,
The fame theroff was clipped with non ousmbre, 4252
All other scooles it dede so enlumyne;
For in that cite, pleyntli to termyne,
Off the seuene artis, as doun from on* hedspryng,
Ther ran out ryuers and stremys off al cunnyng. 4256

and only free
men of good
family could
study there.

These sciences were callid liberall,
Onli off fredam, fraunchise and liberte;
For off a stok that were preued thrall,
Ther sholde no braunche studie in that cite, 4260
But thilke blood that were founde fre,
Bothe be discent & lyneal hih noblesse,
Ther to scoleie sholde haue interesse.

The city was
sacred to
Minerva

This cite was sacrid to Mynerue, 4264
For ther wisdam and ther sapience;
Off Mercurie the feestis thei obserue,
For rethorik and for eloquence;
And myhti Mars gaff hem influence 4268
With glade aspectis, ther parti to a-mende,
Noblesse off knyhtod ther clergie to diffende.

and was famous
for its dukes
and kings,
among whom
Theseus, son of
Ægeus,

This toun was nobleied be title of other thynges,
And most glorious reknyd in that age 4272
Be successioun off dukes and off kynges,

4246. Sunne] Some H. 4248. Name R.
4253. scooles] om. R. 4254. determyne R.
4255. on] an B, H. 4256. stremys & Ryvers H.
4260. Ther] The R. 4266. thei] om. R.
4270. ther] the R. 4273. 2nd off] om. R.

¹MS. J. leaf 22 verso.

A-mong[es] which duk Theseus bi lynage,
Sone off Egistus, ful fressh off his corage,
Excell yng* alle of prudence & manheede
That euer dede the crowne ther posseede.

4276

For to that cite, thoruh his hih noblesse,
In ther diffencis such trust, such [af]fiance
He gaff to hem bi his expert prowesse,
Off his triumphes so gret habundaunce,
And speciali ther renoun to auauunce,
He made hem fre ther truage for to lete
Ageyn Mynos the myhti kyng off Crete.

4280 who slew the
Minotaur and
freed the
Athenians from
their tribute,
was the most
excellent.

4284

For bi his force, the story is weel kouth,
Them to fraunchise and al that regioun,
The Mynotaur he slouh in tendre youth;
And afftirward he off deuocioun,
Taquite hymself[e] lik a champioun,
Theroff made solempne sacrefise
To Iubiter in most humble wise;

4288

And in a theatre callid Maratoun,
Duk Theseus hadde this victorie.
Afftir he wente to Colchos with Iasoun,
Cheeff off counseil, as makid is memorie,
And bi processe to augmente his glorie,
With Hercules his brother to conveie,
Geyn Amazonas he wente to werreie, —

4292

Afterwards
Theseus went
to Colchos
with Jason and
4296 with Femenye
with Hercules,

Conquered hem, his manhod was weel seene,
His force, his noblesse in that mortal stryff.
And afftir that, Ypolita the queene
This Theseus took onto his wiff.
And for his brother he list iupartie his liff,
Duk Pirotheus, whan he dede vndirtake
The centaures to outraie for his sake.

4300

where he mar-
ried Hippolyte.

4304

This centaures poetis specefe,
And Seruyus maketh menciou[n],
How thei were whilom engendrid on a skie,
Whan first ther fadir, callid Yrion,
Was enamourid, ful many day agon,

4308

He also con-
quered the cen-
taurs, creatures
begotten on a
cloud by Ixion,
Juno's
secretary,

4275. off] in R. 4276. Excell yng] Excelsyng B.
4279. fiance] H, R 3. 4284. Ageynst R.
4292. theatre] tiatre R. 4293. this] the R.
4295. made R, H. 4296. bi] om. R. 4298. Ayens R.
4303. list iupartie] leyde in iupardie R.
4308. on] of H, P, R 3. 4310. many a R.

Vpon Iuno, because she was so fair,
Gouneresse and goddesse off the hair. 4312

who fell in
love with his
mistress, and
she, disdain-
ing him, took the
likeness of a
cloud,

This Yrion was hir secretarie,
And for hir fairnesse & excellent beute,
Loued hir ful hote, al-be she was contrarie
To his desir, in Bochas ye may see. 4316
Hym to delude, he writith, how that she
Hirsilff transfourmyd, as she [that] myhte & koude,
Into the liknesse off an heuenli cloude,

which in his
folly he be-
lieved to be
her,

This Yrion pleynli supposyng 4320
It was hirsilff, and euene thus he wrouhte,
The cloude enbracyng, withoute mor tarieng, —
Off his foli the goddesse there he souhte;
And with ther medlyng atwen hem foorth thei
brouhte 4324

The centauris, these beestis merueilous,
Which off nature be founde monstuous.*

The centaurs
were half man,
half horse.
They tried to
carry away
Pirithous' wife
Hippodamia,

Halff man, halff hors, [de]partid thus on
tweyne, [p. 54]

And wonderful bi ther descripcioun, 4328
Off fals[e] malice dede hemselff ordeyne
On Pirotheus to make invasioun,
And hym to putte out off possessioun
Off his wiff, callid Ypodamen, 4332
And hir to rauysshe, maugre all his men.

Ther were off hem an hundred [as] in noumbre,
Swift as the wynd in ther cours rennyng,
Which off malice cast hem to encoumbre 4336
Duk Pirotheus the day off his weddyng,
And to rauysshe his wiff at ther comyng,
Yiff for his parti ther were no diffence
Ageyn ther power to make resistance. 4340

but Theseus
subdued them.

But Theseus list nat to delaie
Pirotheus his brother to diffende.
First the centaures he knyhtli dede outraie
So mortalli, thei durste hym nat offende; 4344
Afftir this conquest to helle thei descende,

4312. Gouneresse R, P, H 5.

4315. al be it R. 4320-4515.] *om. H, fol. missing.*

4326. monstuous] contrarious B, R 3, P — ther nature R.

4327. on] in R, J. 4328. And] A R.

4330. invasioun.] inuocacion R.

4343. knyhtly he did R, J. 4345. this] the R, be J.

Duk Pirothe and worthi Theseus,
Maugre the daunger off cruel Cerberus.

There thei rauysshe in ther mortal teene,
Thoruh ther knythod, yiff ye list to lere,
Despiht off Pluto, Proserpyna the queene,
Which off Iubiter was the douhter deere.
And Pirotheus fond first the manere
Off wilful force, thoruh his hih renoun,
Rewmys to conquere and holde possessioun.

4348 Afterwards he
and Pirithous
descended into
hell, where
they made
off with
Proserpina.

4352

But bi writyng sothli off Ouyde,
He pleyntly tellith how duk Theseus
Arested was in hell, and muste abide,
Bi the force off cruel Cerberus;
And Pluto was to hym contrarious,
Til Pirotheus, to fynden a reles,
The cas declared onto Hercules.

4356 But Ovid says
that Theseus
was arrested in
hell and kept
there by Cer-
berus, and
subsequently
rescued by
Hercules,

4360

Which off his knythod a remedi fond,
To helpe his freend [he] dede his besi peyne;
First bi his prowesse Cerberus he bond
At helle gatis with a treble cheyne,
And off his manhod he dede so ordeyne,
Duk Theseus from daunger to discharge,
Maugre Pluto for to gon at large.

4364 who bound
Cerberus with
a triple chain.

4368

Thei were in armys brēthre bothe tweyne,
Louede as brethre bothe* in werre and pes,
That nouthur koude onto other feyne,
Ther liff to iupartē & putte hemsilff in pres.
And bothe as brethre wer callid Hercules,
To signefie, poetis can weel tell,
This name in conquest all other doth excell.

Theseus and
Pirithous were
brothers in
arms, and
called
Hercules,

4372

Bi old[e] tyme thei that were pereles
For ther noblesse in dyuers regiouns,
All thei for manhod wer namyd Hercules,
Such as were noised for famous champiouns,
Tigres to daunte, boores and leouns,
And renommed among hem euerichon,
Bookis afferme, that Theseus was on.

4376 a name given
to peerless
knights in old
times.

4380

4350. Proserpyna R.

4363. he] *om.* J.

4370. bothe] togidre B, R 3, P (both R, J, H 5).

4371. neithir R, J. 4372. Iupardie R, J.

4382. Bookis] Bochas P, H 5 — afferme] affermeth R, J, P,
H 5.

- Theseus brought peace to Athens, restored exiles,
 First, as I saide, bi his knyhtli trauaile,
 When Athenes stood in dyuysioune 4384
 A-mong hemsilff bi werre and bi bataile,
 Bi* his wisdam and his* discrecioun,
 He sette accord withynne that noble toun:
 Them that were exilid & stood in nouncerteyn, 4388
 He off his knyhtod made hem resorte ageyn;
- made laws and governed wisely,
 He gaff hem lawes wherbi thei sholde hem gie,
 Noble statutis foundid on resoun,
 Sette among hem so prudent policie, 4392
 In ther luyng that no discencioun
 Sholde arise bi non occasioun
 A-mong hemsilff, in hih or low estat,
 Proudyng euere that there were no debat. 4396
- so that the city prospered and became the first centre of knighthood and philosophy.
 Thus gan the cite encrece and multeplie,
 To wexe famous off wisdam and richesse;
 Ther sprang the welle first off philosophie;
 Ther first off knyhtod ros the hih noblesse, 4400
 Bi Theseus, Bochas bereth witnesse:
 Thus thynges too, lik as it is founde,
 Clergie and knyhtod dede there habounde.
- He compelled Creon to return the remains of lords slain at Thebes to their ladies.
 And for to sette the cite in quieete, 4404
 He made pes thoruh al that regioun;
 And off knyhtod he manli dede meete
 The cruel tiraunt that callid was Creoun,
 Maugre hym made restitucioun 4408
 Off lordis bonys, that were at Thebes slayn,
 To the ladies, wheroff thei were ful fayn.
- Theseus lived long in honour and joy, but at last Fortune turned her face away from him and threw him down from her wheel.
 Thus thoruh Grece abrod his renoun spradde; [p. 55]
 His knyhtli fame gan gretli multeplie, 4412
 And longe in ioie thus his liff he ladde,
 Whil that Fortune list hym magnefie:
 But ay hir gladnesse is meynt with sum envie,
 For she, froward, list no mor soiourne 4416
 With Theseus, but gan hir face tourne

4386, 7 are transposed in B. 4386. 2nd his] bi his B.

4387. He] To R.

4388. stooden R.

4391. founde R—on] of J.

4397. bigan R, J. 4403. knyhtod] lawe J, H 5, lowe R.

4404. And] om. R, J. 4412. began R, bigan J.

4417. began R, J, H 5.

Away from hym, wex peruers and froward,
 Off his glorie* ongoodli gan to dulle,
 Doun from hir wheel she made [him] go bakward, 4420
 Off his good fame she gan the fethres pulle;
 Whan his noblesse was hiest at the fulle —
 I meene the fulle off his felicityte —
 Ther folwed an ebbe off gret aduersite. 4424

And, morouer, hir frowardli to quite,
 His onhappis rehersyng on bi on, After he had
slain the
Minotaur
 On the firste, as Bochas list endite,
 Was whan he lay in Crete among his fon, 4428
 And out off prisoun sholde into Grece gon,
 Repeiryng homward & hymself withdrawe,
 The Mynotaur whan he hadde slawe.

The firste emprise that he vndirtook, 4432
 Was whan he scaped thymportable peyne
 Off Mynotaurus, lik as seith my book, and deserted
Ariadne, who
saved his life,
 And with hym ladde the kyngis douhtren tweyne,
 That he off malice falsli list disdeyne 4436
 Geyn Adriane, which that dede hym saue
 From the deth, whan he lay in the caue.

Sholde ha be slayn, hadde nat hir socour be, —
 In his repair he took theroff non heed; 4440 and married
Phædra,
 He lefte hir sool* in gret aduersite
 Withynne an yle, in myscheeff, sorwe & dreed.
 And fair[e] Phedra with hym he dede leed,
 Weddid hir, lik a forswore man: 4444
 Thus with ontrouthe his myscheeff first began.

How Phedra quit hir, — the story is weel knowe — Phædra fell in
love with Hip-
polytus, who
 In his absence, Bochas writith thus,
 Whan that she, withynne a litil throwe, 4448
 Loued ageyn kynde his sone Ypolitus;
 But he to hire was contrariȝus,

4419. gloire B — gan to dulle] be gan to double R, gan to double J.

4420. him] om. R, J, P, R 3, H 5.

4421. fame she gan] name she bigan R, J. 4422. the] om. J.

4425. to aquyte R, J. 4427. to endite R, J.

4433. escapid R, J. 4435. ladde] hadde R, had J.

4437. Geyn] Ayens R, Ayenst J.

4441. sool] soul B, alone H 5.

4446. hir] om. R — knowe] om. R, coupe J.

4449. his] hir J, P, H 5.

- Nolde [not] assente to so foul a deede;
 For shame he fledde, & parcel eek for dreede, 4452
- was killed, as
 you have al-
 ready seen. To his fader for she hym dede* accuse,
 As ye toforn ha[ue] the story sayn.
 And for he dede hir cumpany refuse,
 He wente his way & cam neuer agayn; 4456
 For ye haue herd[e] how that he was slayn
 Withynne a char, thoruh his vnhappi chaunce,
 And how Phedra throuh myscheeff & vengauce
- She then slew
 herself; and all
 this Theseus
 believed to be
 a punishment
 for his deserting
 Ariadne. Slouh hirselff, ageyn al womanheed — 4460
 Heer in this book toforn as I you tolde.
 Of which[e] thyng, whan Theseus took heed,
 Thouhte it was vengauce for his offencis olde;
 For he nat quit hym lik as he was holde 4464
 To Adriane, which sholde ha been his wiff,
 Bi whos socour he scaped with the liff.
- This infortune* and this vnhappi chaunce
 Was to his noblesse ful contrarious. 4468
 The deth also was to hym* a vengauce
 Off his sone callid Ypolitus,
 For sorwe off whom, this duk Theseus
 With salte teris sore gan compleyne 4472
 At the exequies off these ilke tweyne.
- He wept bitter
 tears at their
 funeral and
 was sorely
 grieved when
 Pirithous was
 slain by Cer-
 berus. I trowe also it dede hym sorē greue,
 Duk Pirotheus whan he sauh li ded,
 Slayn with a beeste, & myht[e] nat releue, — 4476
 Kyng Orchus hound, which hadde a treble hed,
 Whos teth horrible off his blood were red.
 Which infortunye, whan he gan beholde,
 Onto the deth he felte his herte colde. 4480
- His greatest
 sorrow was that
 he gave cred-
 ence to Phædra, And for to rekne the grete wrechidnessis,
 Thunhappi chaunces that fill hym in his liff,
 Amongis alle his other grēt distressis,
 Was non so mortal nor so ful off striff 4484
 As whan that he gaff credence to his wiff,
4451. not] *om.* R 3. 4452. eek] also R.
 4453. hym dede] dede hym B.
 4456. his way] away R, J, P, H 5.
 4464. holde] beholde R, J. 4466. the] his R.
 4467. infortune] Infortunye B. 4469. to hym was also B.
 4472. bigan R, bigan to pleyne J.
 4473. At] And R, J — these] the R, þe J.
 4475. sauh li] sih be R, siþe be J. 4479. infortune R, J.
 4484. nor] ne J.

Phedra callid, which off entencioun
Compassid ontreuili an accusacioun

Vpon Ypolitus, off hatreed and envie,
Because he nolde do so gret offence
As for tassente to hir lecherie;
Therefore off deth he felte the violence.
And for his fader to soone gaff credence,
Bochas forbit husbondis al ther lyues,
Withoute preeff, nat leeu to soone her wyues,

4488 and for this
reason Bochas
forbids hus-
bands to be-
lieve what
their wives tell
them unless
there be proof.

Nor be [to] hasti talis for to leeu [p. 56]
Off flaterers in chaumbre nor at table;
Forgers of lesyngis, myn auctour doth weel preeue,
Tabide with lordis that thei be nat able.
Heeron he maketh a chapitle ful notable,
And off his writyng, this was the cause whi:
That pryncis sholde examyne ech parti,

4496 and advises us
not to be
hasty to be-
lieve tales of
any sort.

Off wisdam also and off discrecioun,
Withoute a preeff nat be parciall;
For to a prynce it is confusioun,
Yiff atween parties he be nat founde egall,
Causid many on for to haue a fall;
God suffred such nat longe to contune,*
Withdrouh ther grace & hyndred ther fortune.

4504 A prince must
be equally just
to all men,
otherwise God
will punish
him as he did
Theseus,

Thus Theseus for his hastynesse,
His happ, his grace discrecid day be day,
The fame appallid off his worthynesse,
And froward Fortune in a-wait eek lay,
For his diffautis to hyndre hym yiff she may;
Caste she wolde his noblesse disauaunce.
And thanne his kyngdam bi disobeisaunce

4512

From hym withdrouh honour and reuerence,
Ful frowardli thoruh al his regioun.
Thei off Athenys, bi cruel violence,
Fill ageyn hym in* rebellioun,
That he was fayn to fleen out off the toun:

4516 whose subjects
rebelled and
finally drove
him out of
his kingdom.

4520

4485. whan that] was whan R, J — he] om. J.

4486. off] an R, J. 4489. he] om. J.

4490. to assente J — vnto R. 4494. her] om. J.

4495. leeu] heere R, here J, H 5. 4496. nor] ne J.

4505. betwene R, J. 4507. continue B, contynue H 5.

4509. hastifnesse J. 4510. discrecid] distressid J.

4512. in a-wait eek] also in a wayte R, J.

4516. H begins again. 4519. in] in a B, R 3.

Thus hath Fortune dirked the brihtnesse
Off al his nobley, and cast hym in distresse.

This was the eende bi gret contrariouste
Off Theseus, afftir his daies glade, 4524
Whan the fressh floures off old felicite,
Fortune aduerse made hem for to fade;
Ech thyng mut bowwe whan it is ouer-lade,
Worshepis & honouris, whan thei brihtest shyne, 4528
With vnwar chaunges than rathest doun declayne.

[Lenvoy.]

The prosperity
of princes is
subject to
sudden change;

THE onseur gladnesse, the ioie *transitorie*,*
Thunstable seurnesse, the* *transmutaciouns*,
The cloudi brihtnesse, the fals eclipsid glorie 4532
Off ertthly pryncis which han possessiouns,
Monarchies and dominaciouns —
Ther sodeyn chaung declareth to vs all,
Ther pompous sugre is meynt with bittir gall. 4536

Fortuna can
take from them
their crowns
and sceptres,

This blynde goddess in hir consistorie,*
With hir plesaunce medlith discenciouns,
Afftir tryumphes, conquest and victorie,
Reueth fro pryncis ther sceptres & ther crouns, 4540
Troubleth the peeples with fals rebellious:
Seeth bi these dukis, which from her wheel be fall,
Al worldli sugre is meynt with bittir gall.

as this tragedy
shews.

This tragedie maketh a memorie* 4544
Off dukis tweyne, & off ther hih renouns;
And off ther loue writ a gret historie,
And how thei conquered dyuers regiouns,
Gouerned cites, contres and eek touns, 4548
Til Fortune ther prowessee dede appall,
To shewe ther sugre was* meynt with bittir gall.

4525. flour R.

4529. doun] doth R. 4530, 32. *transitoire*, gloire B.

4531. the] ther B. 4534. Monarchies] & monarchies H.

4537, 39. *consistoire*, victoire B.

4540. fro pryncis] from kyngis R — 2nd ther] the R.

4541. Troubleth] & troublith H.

4542. her] *per* R.

4543. bittir] sum R.

4544, 46. *memoire*, *histoire* B.

4544. a] *om.* R. 4548. eek] also R.

4550. was] is B — menged R 3 — bitir] sum R, J, H 5.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, seeth how deceptorie*
 Been alle these worldli reuoluciouns, 4552
 And how Fortune in hir reclynatorie,
 With hir triacle tempreth fals poisouns:
 So merueilous been hir confecciouns,
 Off frowardnesse she will, what-so be-fall, 4556
 Ay with hir sugre off custum tempre gall.

Princes, Princesses, remember that Fortune always tempers her sugar with gall.

¶ Here Bochas repreuyth all thunstableines of
 Princis & opir persones þat zeve hasti credence
 to euery report with-out preef.¹

ALTHOUH so be, in eueri maner age
 Folkis be dyuers off condiciouns,
 To turne, plie & chaunge in ther corage, 4560
 On outhr parti with sodeyn mocions,
 And for to bowe* bi transmutaciouns
 With eueri wynd, as doon thunstable leuys,
 Which hange on trees in forestis and in greuys. 4564

People are constantly changing in their hearts.

But off alle chaungis, that chaung is most to dreede,
 And most feerful is that variaunce,
 Whan that pryncis, which may the peeple leede,
 Be founde vnstable in ther gouernaunce: 4568
 For ther noblesse and ther hih puissaunce
 Assureth hem, bi a maner [of] fourme,
 What-euer hem list taccomplisshe and parfourme.

but the worst change is when princes are unstable;

To comoun profit thei may most auaille, [p. 57] 4572
 Whan thei be reulid bi wisdom and resoun;
 And to the peeple thei may most disauaille,
 Whan thei lakke wit and discrecioun:
 Thus atwen tweyne, in eueri region, 4576

for their subjects are apt to follow their example.

4551, 53. deceptoire, reclynatoire B. 4556. wole so what R.
 4557. Ay] Euere R. ¹ The heading in J is as follows: "Here

Bochas writeth ayenst hem that yeueth hasty credence to liers and flaterers," MS. J. leaf 24 recto. The following heading is in R: "In this capitle Bochas repreueth | And blameth nat oonly princis | All hem that ouerlihtly yeueth credence | To euery tale & fable which is." In J, written as an ordinary stanza: "In this Chapitle Bochas in sentence | Repreueþ and blameþ not oonly princes | But all hem þat ouerlihtly [g]eueþ credence | To euery tale and fable whiche is | Reported vn to hem [break in handwriting] for sothfastnesse | And list nothyng do as it were dewe | To prove the trouth where it be fals or trewe."

4562. bowve B. 4565. This stanza is marked as in approval R 3.

4570. of] om. R 3. 4576. betwene R.

The peepel draweth, who that can discerne,
To good or badde, as pryncis hem gouerne.

Princes must
not be hasty of
judgment

Thei may nat be to hasti nor sodeyne,
But doon all thyng bi good auysement, 4580
Keepe hem from tungen that parted been on tweyne,
Nat be to rakill to yiue no iugement,
And off no folkis, whan thei been absent,
Leue no talis nor yiue no credence, 4584
Till that the parti may come to audience.

or listen to
tales too
readily. Hasty
credence is far
worse than
slowness of
belief.

Sumwhile hath happid, how that slouh credence
Hath in sum cas be founde ful noious;
But hasti credence, I dar sey in sentence, 4588
A thousand fold is more pereilous;
For onauysid al haste is odious:
For haste ful offte, for lakkyng off resoun,
Off moch[e] peepel hath be destruccioun. 4592

Nothing indeed
is more to
be dreaded.

There is no damage that men can purpose,
Mor to be drad nor mor lamentable,
Than a prynce his eris to onclose
To eueri tale and to eueri fable; 4596
It is a tokne ther hertis be nat stable,
Whan thei to flatereris ther eris do* applie,
Namli to such that can weel forge and lie.

Some people
are false, some
are honourable;

Folkis be dyuers, summe fals and summe trewe, 4600
In dyuers studies doon ther besynesse;
Summe can studie to fynde out talis newe,
And summe for lucre can meyntene weel falsnesse
And holde up quarelis ageyn[e]s rihtwisnesse, 4604
Pretendyng trouthe vnder a fals entent
To hyndre folkis which that been innocent.

it were folly
to think they
should all be
alike;

Men to suppose it were a gret foli,
That folkis sholde in ther oppynyoun 4608
Speke or pronounce alle on o parti,
Or holde o weie in ther entencioun;
For semblabli as there is dyuysioun

4579. nor] ne to R.

4584. nor] neithir R.

4586. Sumwhile] Sumtyme R.

4587. cas] om. R.

4594. nor] ne R. 4596. 2nd to] om. R.

4598. ther] thei R — do] so B, done R. 4599. forge] om. R.

4600. and] om. R. 4607. to] doe P.

4611. a dyuysioun R, J, H 5, P.

- Off* corages, off hih or low degre, 4612
 So is ther treuli a gret dyuersite
- In rehersaile or report off a thyng,
 For to his parti ech man is fauourable:
 Sum man can sey weel in his rehersyng, 4616 therefore a
 Sum man is double, & sum man deceyuable, prince ought to
 Sum men sey trouthe, and summe be variable; examine well
 Wherefore a prynce off riht, as it doth seeme, before he de-
 Sholde weel examyne afforn or that he deeme. 4620 livers his
 judgment.
- For there is noon mor dreedful pestilence
 Than a tunge that can flatre and fage;
 For with his cursid crabbid violence 4624 Woe to
 He enfectith folk* off eueri maner age. flattering,
 Wo to tungenes froward off ther language, lying,
 And wo to tungenes fals, furious and wood, slanderous
 Which off no persone neuer can sey good. tongues!
- Bochas rehersith, it is riht weel sitting 4628 Bochas says
 That eueri man other do comende, we should
 And sey the beste alwey in reportyng; always speak
 For in weel-seieng may no man offende. well of one
 Where men sey weel, God will his grace sende; 4632 another,
 Afftir men been, men mut the pris vpreise,
 Lich ther merit is allowe hem or dispreise.
- But wher a thyng is vtirli onknowe,
 Lat no man ther been hasti off sentence; 4636 and where we
 For rihtful iuges sitting on a rowe, have no knowl-
 Off ther wisdam and off ther hih prudence edge, we
 Will of trouthe haue first sum euydence — should be
 I meene such as gouerned be bi grace — slow to
 Or any doom forbi ther lippis pace. 4640 judge.
- A prynce sholde assemble thyngis tweyne
 Withynne hymself: [afforn] ful prudently
 Shet up his doomys betwixe, lokkis tweyne, 4644 A prince should
 On off the soule, resoun for that party, always decide
 Prudence chose out, and riht for the body; according to
 reason and
 right, and take
 truth and con-
 science to
 counsel.

4612. Off] In B — off] in H.

4615. to] om. H. 4616. in] in all R. 4618. seyth R.

4622. flatre] flaterie R — in red in margin, MS. J. 24 c: nota.
de falsis linguis.

4624. infectith R — folkis B, folkes R 3 — maner] om. J.

4626. furious] froward H.

4628. it is riht weel] as it is wele R. 4629. eueri] eurre R.

4631. no man may R, J. 4641. forth bi R — ther] the H.

4643. afforn] om. H. 4644. betwixt R. 4645. soule] sone R.

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And atween bothe, or he yiue a sentence,
To counsell calle trouthe and good conscience. 4648

He should first
find out
whether the
accuser proceeds
honestly,

First to considre with eueri circumstance,
Dilligentli doon theron his labour,
Off discrecioun to take the ballaunce,
And first weie out who is thaccusour, 4652
And whethir that he for falsnesse or fauour
In his processe list for to procede;
Heroff a prynce must off riht take heede.

and if he is a
friend or enemy
of the accused
and a man of
good or bad
report.

He muste also considre bi and bi, [p. 58] 4656
What that he is, which is to hym accusid,
And whethir thaccusour be freend or enmy,
Or whethir he shal been accepte* or refusid
In his accus — this muste affor be musid — 4660
And whethir he be, bi report off his name,
A man weel noised or sclaudrid bi diffame.

If Theseus had
done this, he
would not have
caused his son's
death;

Yiff Theseus hadde be thus auysed,
And considred off resoun the maner, 4664
He hadde nat so hastili deuysed
His sonys deth, lich as ye shal ler:
For yiff ther hadde assemblid been I-feer
In his persone prudence and resoun, 4668
He sholde ha[ue] seyn in his discrecioun,

for, as Bochas
says, women are
born liars and
sometimes talk
too much.

Be knowlechyng off long expêience,
Off his wiff the gret onstedfastnesse,
Which thoruh hir froward compassid eloquence 4672
Was redi euere to brynge folk in distresse,
As in his wrytyng Bochas berth witnesse,
Off ther nature women can flatre and fage,
And been sumwhile to copious off language. 4676

Also off wisdom, this duk Theseus
Shold ha[ue] considred afforn in his entent,
How that his sone, callid Ypolitus,

4647. bitwene hem both R.

4650. And diligently R — theron] ther R. 4654. for] om. R.

4659. he] that he R — accept] acceptid B and other MSS.
except H 5 which has accepte.

4660. accus] actis J, H 5 — this] he P, thus H 5.

4663. thus had been J, R, H 5.

4672. hir] his R. 4673. in] to R.

4676. sum tyme R — to copious off] copious of ther R.

4677. this] om. R.

Off al onclennesse was founde ay innocent;
And how that he off custum made his went
Into forestis duryng his yong age,
To hunte at beestis which that were sauage.

4680 Theseus should
have remem-
bered that his
son was a
hunter

Rennyng on foote, as ye shal vndirstonde,
On hillis, valis teschewen idilnesse,
Mooder off viciis, with his bowe in honde,
Diane to serue off huntyng cheeff goddessse.
Sumtyme to hauke he dede his besynesse;
Eek onto fisshyng he gretly was applied,
So that his youthe was neuer onocupied.

4684

4688

Thus he lyued in wodis solitarie,
And off Venus despised the seruyse;
A-mong[es] women he wolde neuer tarie,
Ther felshipp he dede alwey despise:
For he dempte, be sentence off the wise,
Who touchith pich, bassay men may see,*
It failith nat he shal defouled be.

4692

who despised
the society of
women

4696

Ypolitus sauh weel this thyng afforn,
Kept hym at large from such contrariouste;
His greene youthe he wolde nat haue it lorn,
To be diffoulid for lak off chastite:
For he lyued euer in virgynyte,
And neuer dede, Bochas wil nat varie,
Nothyng that was onto God contrarie.

4700

and always re-
mained chaste.

4704

Thus off entent he kepte his bodi cleene
Duryng his liff, bothe in thouht & deede,
Whos mooder was Ypolita the queene
Off Amazones, in Ouyde ye may reede.
But, o allas, that Theseus took heede,
For a tale off Phedra ful off gile,
Withoute gilt his sone to exile.

His mother
was Hippolyte;

4708

Aftir whos deth[e], summe^e poetis seyn,
How that Diana, for his chastite,
Restorid hym onto lyue ageyn
Bi Esculapius, and gaff hym liberte
In hir forestis to huntten and go fre.

4712

and after his
death Diana
restored him
to life and
gave him leave
to hunt in her
forests forever.

4716

4680. ay] euer R. 4686. in] on H, J, H 5.

4689. Eek] Also R — gretly he was R. 4692. dispised R.

4694. alwey] euer H, euer P, euer R 3.

4696. Who] Who so R, J — see] weel see B — *In MS. J. in red
in margin: Qui tangit picem &c.*

4698. seeh R — beforne H. 4707. was] om. H.

For which restoryng, as writ Ouidius,
As twies a man, men callid hym Virbius.

Bochas here
makes a great
outcry against
women and
says that they
are deceitful by
nature and like
insatiable beasts.

¶ Heer Bochas makith an exclamacion a-geyn the
pride of vommen And thonseurnes of princes.

BUT Bochas heer, I not what he doth meene,
Maketh in his book an exclamacioun 4720
Ageyn[e]s women, that pite is to seene —
Seith how ther lyne, ther generacioun
Been off nature double off condicioun,
And callith hem eek dyuers and onstable, 4724
Beestis rassemblyng that been insaciable.

Of course he
means only the
women of Crete,
for the women
of this country
are very differ-
ent.

He meneth off women that be born in Crete,
Nothyng off hem that duelle in this contre:
For women heer, al doubilnesse thei lete, 4728
And ha[ue] no tech off mutabilite,
Thei loue no chaungis nor no duplicite;
For ther husbondis, in causis smal or grete,
What-euer thei seyn, thei can nat countirplete. 4732

Blessed
be God, who
made them so
humble and
patient. I
don't mean
one, but all,
as their hus-
bands can
testify;

Blessid be God, that hath hem maad so meek, [p. 59]
So humble and feithful off ther condiciouns;
For thouth men wolde cause* and mater seek
Ageyn ther pacience to fynde occasiouns, 4736
Thei han refusid al contradiccions,
And hem submittid thoruh ther gouernaunce,
Onli to meeknesse and womanli suffraunce.

I speke off alle, I speke nat off on, 4740
That be professid onto lowlynesse;
Thei may ha[ue] mouthes, but language ha[ue] thei non:
Alle trewe husbondis can bern heroff witnesse;
For weddid men, I dar riht weel expresse, 4744
That haue assaied and had experience,
Best can recorde off wifli pacience.

4718. callid] call R — *between this line and the next the following note in red, MS J. 25 a: "Nota de transformatis i bis vii."*
4722. Seith] Seeth H — 2nd ther] the H. 4724. eek] also R.
4726. women] them H. 4727. hem that is muddled in R.
4729. tech] tache R. 4734. feithful] feerdful R.
4735. cause] causes B, R 3 P, H — mateers H.
4743. heroff] per of R.
4744. riht] ful R.

For as it longeth to men to be sturdy,
 And sumwhat froward as off ther nature,
 Riht so can women suffre patiently,
 And alle wrongis humbl[el]i endure.
 Men sholde attempte no maner creature,
 A[nd] namli women, ther meeknesse for to preue, 4752
 Which may weel suffre whil no man doth hem greue.

4748 for, unlike
 men, they
 suffer all
 wrongs in
 humility.

Eueri thyng resortith to his kynde,
 As Bochas writith, sum tyme off the yeer;
 And yit, who serchith, bi processe he shal fynde 4756
 That trouthe and vertu may neuer fade off cheer:
 For rihtwisnesse will alwey shyne cleer;
 Trouthe & falsnesse, in what thei ha[ue] to doone,
 Thei may no while assemble in o persone. 4760

Truth and
 falsness are
 never found
 together in one
 person,

Feith and flatrie, thei be so contrarie,
 Thei may togidre holde no soiour;
 Nor symplesse, which that can nat varie,
 May neuer accorde with a baratour, 4764
 Nor innocence with a losengour,
 Nor chastite can nat hirsilff applie
 Hir to confourme onto [no] ribaudie.

or good faith
 and flattery,
 simplicity in a
 boaster or
 chastity in a
 ribald.

Crafft and nature sue the professioun 4768
 Bi thordynaunce set in ther courage;
 And ech man folweth his condicioun,
 As off the stok the frut hath his tarage:
 Pilgrymes may gon ful ferr in ther passage, 4772
 But I dar seyn, how ferr that euer thei go,
 Ther bit sum tarage off that that thei cam fro.

Each man lives
 according to
 his character.

Bochas maketh an introduccioun
 In this chapitle, off the hih noblesse 4776
 That pryncis han in ther possessioun;
 And bi a maner lawhhyng doth expresse,
 How for to sette hem in gret sekirnesse,

Bochas laughs
 at those
 princes who
 have sergeants
 waiting upon
 them and
 soldiers

4747. it] *om.* R. 4750. humbleth R.

4753. doth] *do* P, H 5.

4755. as write Boch. H.

4759. &] *om.* R. 4761. so] *om.* R.

4762. may not R — no] *om.* R. 4763, 65. Nor] Neithir R.

4768. MS. J. 25 b in red between the lines: "Ars mutat naturam."

4771. his] the R. 4774. 2nd that] *om.* R.

4775. Bochas maketh] Makith here bochas R.

4776. the] *om.* R.

4778. lawhhyng] louthyng R — doth] *om.* H.

- Thei han sergauntis vpon hem abidyng,
 And men off armys day and nyht waityng. 4780
- to keep people
 from approach-
 ing them.
- That no man entre, but yiff he ha[ue] licence,
 The froward porteris stondyng at the gate
 Putte men a-bak be sturdi violence; 4784
 It were ful hard ageyn hem to debate,
 Ther wachchis kept erli and eek late;
 And hem tassure a-nyhtis whil thei slepe,
 The chaumberleyens ther dorys streihtli keepe. 4788
- They are
 watched
 over day and
 night by serv-
 ants, their
 food and drink
 are tasted for
 them, they live
 in suspicion and
 fear.
- Men assigned ther metis to assaie,
 To taste ther wynes, list ther were tresoun;
 Such mortal dreed these lordis doth affraie;
 So is ther seurnesse meynt with suspeciou[n]: 4792
 Who fedith hym gladli, that ferith hym off poisoun?
 But pore folk frau[n]chised from such dreed,
 [With] such as God sent meryly* thei hem feed.
- Poor people are
 free from such
 dread. The
 highest estates
 have least peace
 of mind.
- But poetis that write tragedies, 4796
 Ther compleynyng is al off hih estatis,
 Rehersyng euer ther pitous iuparties,
 Ther sodeyn chaungis & ther woful fatis,
 Ther dyuysious and ther mortal debatis, 4800
 And ay conclude ther dites, who can reede,
 Hiest estatis stonde ay most in dreede.
- Of all this
 liars and flat-
 terers are the
 cause, and worst
 of all is when
 princes believe
 what they say.
- And ground & roote off al thi[s] mortal trouble,
 As writ Bochas and pley[n]li berth witness, 4804
 Been these lieres with ther tungen double,
 Themsilff afforcyng ay trouthe to oppresse;
 With whom flatrie is a cheeff maistresse:
 And, werst off all, to ther dreedful sentence, 4808
 Is whan pryncis been hasti off credence.
- Hasty credence
 is the source of
 great sorrow.
- Hasti credence is roote off al errour,
 A froward stepmooder off al good counsail,
 Ground off gret hyndryng, a dreedful deceyuour, 4812

4780. sergauntis] seruauntis R, J, H 5.

4781. waityng] awaityng H, R, P, H 5.

4782. entre] may entre R. 4786. eek] also R.

4787. a-nyhtis] on nyhtis R — whil] whan R.

4790. wynes is altered into wyffes R.

4795. With] om. R, J, H 5 — sent] hem sent R, J, them sent
H 5 — meryly] with merthe (mirthe) B, J, R, H 5.

4798. Rehersyng] Rewerdyng R.

4800. 2nd ther] om. H. 4801. ay] euer R.

4806. afforcyng] ay forshyng R.

Fair offte off face, with a ful pereilous tail,
 Gladli concludyng with ful gret disauail,
 Next neyh[e]bour onto repentaunce
 To all that truste & haue in hir plesaunce. 4816

¶ Lenvoye.

PRYNCIS, considreth, how in eueri age [p. 60] Princes, the
 Folkis be dyuers off ther condicioun most dreadful
 To plie & turne & chaunge in ther corage; thing you can
 Yit is ther non, to myn opynyoun, do is to
 So dreedful chaung nor transmutacioun, deliver a hasty
 As chaung off pryncis to yiue a iugement, judgment.
 Or hasti credence, withoute ausement. 4820

It is weel founde a passyng gret damage, 4824 A story may
 Knowe and expert in eueri regioun, look well, yet
 Thouh a tale haue a fair visage, be wholly false.
 It may include ful gret decepcioun:
 Hid vndir sugre, galle and fell poisoun, 4828
 With a fresh face off double entendement —
 Yit yiueth no credence withoute ausement.

Let folkis alle be war off ther language,
 Keep ther tungen from oblocucioun, 4832 Beware of
 To hyndre or hurte bi ño maner outrage, speaking ill of
 Preserue ther lippis from al detraccioun, others,
 Fro chaumpartie and contradiccioun;
 For list that fraude wer founde in ther entent, 4836
 Ne yiueth no credence withoute ausement.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, off noble and hih parage, and above all
 Which ha[ue] lordshipe and domynacioun, avoid liars and
 Voide hem a-side, that can flatre and fage; flatterers.
 Fro tungen that haue a tarage off tresoun, 4840
 Stoppith your eris from ther bittir soun;
 Beth circumspect, nat hasti but prudent,
 And yiueth no credence withoute ausement. 4844

4813. offte] *om.* R — ful] *om.* R. 4814. disseivaille R.

4817. Pryncessis considre R.

4819. & chaunge in ther] *in* ther & chaunge R.4821. nor] *ne* R. 4822. a] *om.* R. 4829. entendent R.4830. yiueth] *yeue* R.

4832. allocucion R. 4833. maner of R.

4838. parage] *Corage* H.

[Off Quene Althea, and how Hercules by women
was brouht to confusioun.]¹

Bochas, turning
again to those
who had been
cast down by
Fortune,

WHAN Bochas hadde shewed his sentence,

And declared his opynyoun

Geyn hem that wer[e]n hasti off credence,

He gan anon make a digressioun

4848

Fro that mater, and off entencioun

To serche out mo, his purpos to contune,*

That were doun cast & hyndred bi Fortune.

saw among a
large company
of worthies
Queen Althea
weeping, with
torn and dis-
ordered hair,

And, as he thouhte, he sauh a cumpanye

4852

Off many worthi, which to hym dede appeere;

And a-mong alle first he dede espie

Queen Althea, as she gan neihhe hym neere,

4856

Al bedewed hir face and eek hir cheere

With salt[e] teris, that pite was to seene,

Which whilom was off Calidonye* the queene.

She was the douhter off kyng Testius,

Weddid to Oene off Calidoyn* kyng,

4860

Off cheer and face apperyng ful pitous,

and clad in a
ragged black
gown.

Hir her to-torn and frowardli liggyng;

And in tokne also off compleynyng,

As writ Bochas, wheroff he took [good] heed,

4864

Blak was hir habite, and al to-rent hir weed.

A sone she hadde, Mell[e]ager he hihte;

In erthe was ther non fairere for to see,

Riht weel fauoured in eueri manys sihte;

4868

And, as I fynde, at his natyuite

Present wern the Fatal Sustren thre

With ther rokke, and gan to spyne faste,

She had a son
called Meleager,
and at his
birth the Fates
cast a brand
into the fire,
and said that
when it was
consumed the
child would die.

And took a brond and into fir it caste.

4872

And in that hour this was her language:

"Touchyng this child, we ful accorded be,

And han disposid the terme eek off his age,

4847. Geyn] Ayens R. 4850. contune] contynue B.

4852. he sauh] hym seeh R.

4856. bedewed] be wepid R — eek] also R.

4857. was] is H.

4858. whilom] sum tyme R — Calidonye] Calcidonye B, H 5,

Calcydonye J, Calcidon R 3 — the] om. H.

4859. Thestius P.

4860. Calidoyn*] Calcidoyne B, Calcydonye J, Calcidonye H 5.

4864. he] I H. 4866. Melliager R, Mellager H, R 3.

4871. rokke and gan] rokkis and bigan R.

4873. in] into R.

4875. the terme eek] also the terme R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 25 verso.

The space concludid off his destyne,
As long[e] tyme, who-so list to see,
Til this brond among the coles rede
Be ful consumed into asshes dede." 4876

But whan Althea espied ther entente,
And conseuyed the fyn off ther sentence,
She ros hire up, and the brond she hente
Out off the fir with gret dilligence,
Queynt anon the fires violence; 4880 But Althea
extinguished the
flame and put
the brand
away underlock
and key.

The doom off Parcas she gan thus disobeie,
The brond reseruyng vnder lok and keie. 4884

Touchyng the fader off this Mell[e]ager,
Oeneus, off hym thus I reede,
How he wente and souhte nyh and fer
Goddis and goddessis, who-so list take heede,
In hope onli for to ha[ue] gret meede;
For to hem alle, poetis thus deuise,
Sauf to Diana, he dede sacrefise. 4888 Meleager's
father, Oeneus,
in hope of
reward made
offerings to all
the gods and
goddesses ex-
cept Diana, who
in anger sent a
boar to devas-
tate his land,

Wheroff she cauhte an indignacioun;
Caste she wolde on hym auengid be;
Sente a boor into his regioun,
Ful sauage and ful off cruelte,
Which deuoured the frut off many a tre
And destroyed his cornys and his vynes,
That such scarsete off vitaille and off wyne 4896

Was in his land vpon euery side, [p. 61]

That the peeple off necessite
Compellid wern a-mong hem to prouide
Sum mene weie to saue ther contre. 4904 which was killed
by Meleager.

And at the laste thei condescendid be,
That Mell[e]ager, lusti off his corage,
Shold chese with hym folk fresh & yong off age,

This dreedful boor myhtili tenchace. 4908

And fourth thei wente, echon deuoid off dreed,
With rounde speris thei gan hym to manace,
But Mell[e]ager made first his sides red,
And with a suerd[e] thanne smet off his hed; 4912

4879. aspiede R.

4882. hire] *om.* R, J, H 5.

4888. Oeneus H. 4889] How that he souht nyh & fer R.

4899. distried R. 4900. vitailles R. 4903. hem] *om.* R.

4905. thei] the R. 4906. his] *om.* R. 4907. fressh folkis R.

4910. began R. 4911. red] bleede H.

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Wheroff the contre was ful glad & fayn,
And in this wise the tusshi boor was slayn.

Some books
say that Ata-
lanta wounded
the boar first,
with an arrow,

Summe bookis telle off this huntyng,
That a ladi, which was born in Arge, 4916
Callid Athalanta, douhter to the kyng,
To sle this boor took on hire the charge,
And with an arwe made his wounde large.
Eek in Ouide lik as it is founde, 4920
Because that she gaff the firste wounde,

and Meleager,
her chosen
knight, gave
her its head,
and when his
two uncles took
it from her by
force, he slew
them.

Mell[e]ager anon for a memorie,
As he that was hir owne chose knyht,
Gaff hir the hed in tokne off this victorie. 4924
But his tweyne vncles, ageyn al skile & riht,
Rafft hir the hed, off verray force & myht,
Hauyng despiht that she, in ther auys,
Off this victorie sholde bere away the prys. 4928

With which iniurie Mell[e]ager was wroth,
And ageyn hem proudli gan disdeyne;
Pullith out a suerd and vpon hem he goth,
And thoruh his manhod slouh his vncles tweyne, 4932
And afftir that dede his besi peyne
To take the hed, and with ful humble entente,
To Athalante ageyn it to presente.

When Althæa
heard of this
she grew pale

On off his vncles was callid Flexippus, 4936
A manli knyht, and but yong off age;
The tother brother named Thesysus.
But whan ther suster herde off this outrage,
How thei were slayn, she gan in hir visage 4940
Wexe ded [&] pale, allas, for lak off blood,
Whan she espied the cause how it stood.

and began to
consider the
love she bore
her brothers and
her son's hasty
deed.

She hadde no mater, God wot, to be fayn,
Queen Althea, to stonden and beholde 4944
Hir brethre tweyne off hir sone slayn
At the huntyng, off which toforn I tolde.
First thyngis too she gan peise & onfolde:

4914. tusshi] tuskys R, tuskys J.
4915. Summe] And some H, P, And som R 3.
4919. woundis R. 4920. Eek] Also R.
4926. Rafft] berauht H. 4927. ther] his R.
4930. bigan R. 4931. Pullid R. 4932. he slouh R.
4936. callid] namyd H. 4937. and] om. R.
4938. Theseus H, R. 4942. aspied R.
4944. to] sto R (blunder of scribe). 4947. too] tweyne R.

Off hir brethre the loue and nyh kenrede, 4948
And off hir sone the hasti cruel deede.

And remembryng, she castith in ballaunce,
Off hertli wo that she dede endure,
Thouhte yiff she dede vpon ther deth vengauunce, 4952
To slen hir sone it were ageyn nature.

It were against
nature to slay
her son;

Thus in a weer longe [time] she dede endure,
Hir dedli sorwe peisyng euerideel,
Whethir she* shal be tendre or cruel. 4956

Thus tendre, I meene, hir sone for to spare,
Or punshe the deth off hir brethre tweyne.
Thus counfortles, al destitut and bare,
In langwisshyng shendureth foorth hir peyne; 4960
And remedie can she non ordeyne,
Sauf fayn she wolde auenge hir, yiff she may,
But thanne cam nature foorth and seide nay.

yet the murder
of his uncles
must be
avenged.

It was hir sone, a-geyn al kyndli riht 4964
On whom she caste auenged for to be:
To women alle an ougli straunge siht,
That a mooder, deuoid off al pite,
Sholde slen hir child so merciles parde. 4968
Nay nay, nat so, nature wil nat assente;
For yiff she dede, ful sore she shal repente.

Without com-
fort she
remained
undecided;

But O allas, al fatal puŕueiaunce
Kepith his cours, as summe clerkis seyn; 4972
But the writyng off doctours, in substaunce,
And these dyuynes reple the ageyn,
And afferme thoppynyoun is in veyn
Off hem that truste on fate or destyne: 4976
For God aboue hath the souereynte,

but Fate must
take its course

And off Fortune the power may restreyne,
To saue and spille lik as folk disserue;
Ageyn his will thei may nothyng ordeyne 4980
Off necessite, what cours that thei conserue.
But this mateer al hooli I reserue

(although not
against God's
will),

4951. indure H.

4954. she dyd long while endure R (*in later band*) — time]
om. R 3.

4956. she] that she B, R 3. 4960. foorth] for R.

4961. non] noon othir H, none other P.

4963. forth nature R — foorth] ageyn H. 4970. shal] did R.

4975. And] om. H. 4976. on] of H — destanye R.

4981. that] om. R.

Onto deuynys to termyne and conclude,
Which apparteneth to* no folkis rude.

4984

and Althæa,
suddenly moved
to wrath,

But Althea, off Calidoayne* queen,
Gan sore muse, and heeng in a ballaunce:

[p. 62]

Hir brethre ded, whan she dede hem seen,
Thanne was she meued anon to do vengauunce

4988

Vpon hir sone bi ful gret displesaunce;
But as poetis list for to compile,

Nature made hire withdrawe hir hand a while.

Thus atwen ire and twen affeccioune

4992

She heeld hir longe, on nouthur parti stable,

Till that she cauhte in hir opynyoun

A sodeyn rancour, which made hire be vengable;

4996

And hasti wrathe,* which is nat comendable,

Ageyn hir sone, maad hire with hir hond

Out off hire chest to take the fatal brond.

cast the brand
into the fire.

And sodenli she cast it in the fir,

And wex cruel, ageyn al womanheede,

5000

To execute hir venymous desir.

The fatal brond among the flawmys rede

Consumed was into ashes dede;

And furiously in hir malencolie,

5004

The vengauunce doon, thus she gan to crie:

Vengeance
thus taken,
she cried
aloud to the
Parce, Clotho,
Lachesis, and
Atropos,

“O ye Parchas, froward sustre thre,

Which off loue keepe the librarie,

And off childre at ther natyuyte

5008

Waite his sentence, which [that] may nat varie,

Wherso it be welful or contrarie,

Vpon his doomys takyng alway heed,

How that ye shal dispose the fatal threed.

5012

Thou Cloto first takest* thi rokke on honde,

And Lachesis* afftir doth begynne,

4983. determyne R.

4984. apparteneth] nat parteneth B, R, J, H 5 — to] onto B,
R, H 5 — no] om. R, J, H 5.

4985. Calidoayne] Calcidoayne B, Calidonye R.

4986. Bigan R — a] om. R. 4987. seen] se H.

4992. atwen] bitwene R — twen] betwene R.

4996. wraththe B — is nat] ne is R.

5002. flawmys] colis R. 5006. sustren R, H.

5008. children R. 5009. Waite his] Awayten the R.

5013. first] om. R, J, H 5 — takest] cast B, H (scribal blunder
for tast), take R, takith R 3 — on] in R.

5014. Lachesis] Lathesis B, R, J (a slip of pen merely, c and
are often scarcely distinguishable).

Bi gret auys, who can vndirstonde,
 The threed on lengthe to drawen & to spynne; 5016
 But whan the sperit shal fro the bodi twynne,
 Thou Attropos doost thi cruel peyne
 Ful frowardli to parte the threed on tweyne.

I may weel pleyne on such departisoun, 5020
 Nat for a day, but, o allas, for euere!
 Ye han ontwynyd and maad dyuysiou
 Off my too brethre, [and] causid hem disseuere,
 That heer a-lyue I shal seen hem neuere. 5024
 And I off haste, allas, whi dede I so!
 Tauenge ther deth ha[ue] slayn my sone also.

O ye thre douhtren off Herberus the felle,
 Whos ougli mooder was the blake nyht, 5028
 Al your kynreede and lynage lith in helle;
 And for tauenge the wrong and gret onriht
 Which that I haue accomplisshid in your siht,
 I will with you perpetueli compleyne, 5032
 Lich my desert endure sorwe & peyne!"

And whil she gan thus with herself[e] stryue
 Vpon hir sorwes, that were eend[el]les,
 She made a suerd thoruhout hir herte ryue, 5036
 Off hir liff heer she was to rech[el]les.

AND Bochas affter, amonges al the pres,
 Sauh, as hym thouhte, with a ful hidous cheer,
 Ded off visage, Hercules appeere, 5040

Whos fader was Iubiter the grete,
 His mooder douhter off kyng Amphitrioun,
 Callid Alcumena, whilom born in Crete.
 And as poetis rehersyn oon bi oon, 5044
 So excellent was ther neuer noon,

Hercules, son
 of Jupiter and
 Alcmena, most
 famous of men,
 next appeared
 before Bochas.

5015. who so R. 5016. on] of R.

5018. Antropos R, J, H 5, Antrapos R 3. 5019. on] or R.

5020. on] in R, J, of R 3 — departicioun H, H 5, departicion R, P.

5023. brethern J — and] om. H.

5024. heer] he R — on lyue R.

5027. Cerebus R, J, H 5, Herebus H, Erebus P — thre] om. J.

5029. Al] And R — & al your lynage hih R.

5034. Large capital in B — she gan] be gan J — with hirsilff
 bus streyue R, J.

5036. to ryue R, arive H.

5037. heer] om. H, R, R 3 — liff] silff R, silf J, H 5 — to] om.

R, so H, R 3, P.

5038. B has no initial here. 5042. kyng] om. R.

5043. sumtyme R.

To speke off conquest, [of] victorie* and [of] fame,
Heer in this world that hadde so gret a name.

He was terrible
to look upon,
black-bearded,
with bristly hair
and dressed in
a lion's skin,

Dreedeful of look he was, and riht terrible, 5048
His berd eek blak, which heeng ful lowe doun,
And al his her as bristlis wer horrible,

His robe also, ful merueilous off facioun,
Was off the skyn off a fers leoun, 5052
Which [from his bake] of verray force he rente,
With-in a forest* alone whan he wente.

and he held
a mace
of steel in his
hand.

In his hand he bar a maas off steel,
Which to beholde was wonder large & huge 5056
Bi apperence, as Bochas felte weel;

Dempte off resoun, as a rihtful iuge,
That Hercules hadde to his refuge
Wisdam with force, for tencrece his fame, 5060
Alle beestis wilde for to make hem tame.

"Take heed,
Bochas," he
said, "my
merits are
more com-
mendable than
any tongue can
tell.

And onto Bochas he gan loude crie,
"Tak riht good heed[e], for it is no fable,
I for my meritis, to speke off cheualrie 5064
And noble triumphes, am most comendable,
To be preferrid most worthi and most hable,
Which haue accomplisshid al that may excelle
Thoruh hih prowessse, that any tunge* can telle. 5068

"Before my
birth, Jove
said to Juno,
that Hercules,
noblest of the
nobles, would
be born on
such a day.

Eek off my berthe, in heuene ful yore ago [p. 63]
Fulli conceyued my constellacioun,
Mihti Ioue saide onto Iuno,
On such a day, in such a regioun, 5072
Oon shal be born, most myhti off renoun,
Noblest off nobles bothe in werre and pes,
Off whom the name shal be Hercules.

5046. victoire B.

5049. eek] also R.

5053. from his bake] *om.* H, R 3.

5054. With-in a forest] From his bak B, H, R 3 — whan] as R 3, H 5.

5055. mas J, mase H 5, mace R, R 3, P.

5058. Demede R.

5060. With force wisdom R — for] *om.* R — fame] name H, R 3.

5061. Alle] As R.

5065. nobles R — triumphes *is muddled in* R.

5068. hih] his R 3, his hih R — tunge] mouth B, H, *man* R 3.

5069. Eek] Also R.

The which[e] doom whan Iuno vndirstood,
 Off Iubiter conceyuyng the entente,
 And knew my fate sholde be so good,
 To Lucynya hir messenger she sente." . . .
 But summe seyn, how doun hirself she wente
 To this goddesse, goddesse off chilyng,
 And hir besouhte to graunte hire hir askyng:
 That she wolde from Hercules translate
 The influence off his natyuyte,
 Helpe to reuerse his fame and eek his fate,
 And graunte it hooli to yong Euristee;
 And that Lucynya present wolde be
 The same hour bi Iubiter prouyded,
 It to posseede al hool and ondeuyded.
 Thus to the mooder off [this] Euristee,
 Iuno the goddesse grauntid hir fauour,
 Therbi disposyng that he sholde be
 Mihti off puissaunce lik an emperour;
 But off his noblesse the conquest & labour,
 And off his manhod the prowesse and pursut
 Bi Hercules was fully execut.
 Thus Hercules hadde the trauaile,
 And Euristeus bar away the name;
 Eek Hercules fauht in plate & maile,
 And hih emprises proudli dede attame:
 But the report off his noble fame
 To Euristeus was fynali ascryued;
 Thus off his thank was Hercules depryued.
 Ful offte in armys sum man doth riht weel,
 And offte causith that the feeld is wonne;
 And off a-nother that dede neueradeel,
 The price out-spreddith lich a sheene sonne.
 And offte it happith, that he that best hath ronne
 Doth nat the spere lich his desert posseede,
 Wher fals fauour yeueth eueri man his meede.

5076 "But Iuno
contrived that
my good for-
tune should be
translated to
young Eurys-
theus."

5080

5084

5088

5092

5096

5100

So it was
Hercules who
achieved the
conquests and
had all the
labour, while
Eurysheus
bore away the
name.

5104

It often hap-
pens that the
man who wins
the victory
does not get
the credit for
it. Fame has
more than one
trumpet.

5083. wolde] sholde H.

5085. reuerse] reserue R, J, H 5 — fame] name R, J, H 5 —
eek] om. R, J, H 5.

5090. this] om. H. 5097. Thus] This J.

5099. Eek] Thus R, Also J, H 5. 5100. hih] his R.

5102. was fynali] fully was R.

5107. lich a] as shyneth be R, as shineþ be J, H 5, P.

5108. 2nd that] which R.

Fame in hir paleis hath trumpes mo than oon,
 Summe off gold that yeuen a ful fressh soun; 5112
 Sum man hath laude, that deserueth non,
 And summe ha[ue] been ful worthi off renoun,
 Nothyng preferrid bi comendacioun,
 As bi report off statis hih and lowe, 5116
 So frowardli Famys trumpe hath blowe.

Touchyng armys, the poore nor the riche
 Be nat echon off herte coragous;
 Nor alle men may nat been iliche, 5120
 Nor off ther name egal nor gracious.
 And thouh the poore ha[ue] be victorious,
 Off auenture to do ful weel sum day,
 Other ha[ue] pynchid to take his thank away. 5124

It does not follow that he who slays the deer always eats the venison, and although one

man may beat the bush, it may be another who gets the birds.

Oon sleth the deer with an hokid arwe,
 Whos part is non yit off the venysoun;
 Oon bet the bussh, another hath the sparwe,
 And alle the birdis in his possessioun; 5128
 Oon draweth his nettis in ryuers vp & doun,
 With sundri baitis* cast out lyne and hook,
 And hath no part off al that euer he took.

An euidence heeroff ye may see, 5132
 Ful notable to be put in memorie,*
 Off Hercules and [of] Euristee;
 For Hercules gat ay the victorie,
 And Euristeus receyued hath the glorie. 5136
 Thus ther palme partid was on tweyne;
 The ton reioisshid, the tother bar the payne.

Hercules and Eurystheus are an example of this.

Eurystheus was a prince of Athens, son of king Sthenelus; but it was Hercules who won the prize of victory.

Euristeus was a prynce off Athene,
 Sone and hair be discent off lyne 5140
 Onto the kyng that callid was Stillene,
 Vnder whos myht, as Bochas doth termyne,
 Hercules thoruh knyhtli disciplyne
 Profitid so, most manli and most wis, 5144
 That from all othre he bar away the pris.

5112. yeueth H.

5117. Famys] fame his R, J, P, H 5. 5118. nor] ne R, J, P.

5119. hertis R. 5120, 21. Nor] Neithir R.

5122. poore man R. 5127. betith R. 5129. &] om. R.

5130. baitis] battis B — out] om. R 3. 5132. An] In R.

5133, 35, 36. memoire, victoire, gloire B. 5134. 2nd of] om. H.

5137. departid was in R.

5139. a] om. R, H 5. 5142. determyne R.

5144. Profitid] Prouided J, Prouisid R, Prouidid P.

But O allas, that euer it sholde fall,
 So noble a knyht, so manli, so notable,
 That any spotte sholde his pris appall
 Or cause his corage for to been onstable,
 Which is a thyng doolful and lamentable,
 From his knyhtod, which is a thyng to straunge,
 That euer a woman sholde his herte chaunge!

5148 Alas that so
 noble a man
 should be
 drawn from his
 knighthood by
 a woman!

I will excuse hem, because ther nature
 Ys to chaungen hertis and corages;
 A-geyn ther power no force may endure,
 For ther flatrie and sugrid fair language,
 Lich Sirenes, fressh off ther visage,
 For tenchaunge off pryncis the noblesse,
 Mo than Hercules can bern heeroff witnesse.

[p. 64] I will
 excuse them,
 for it is their
 nature to cause
 hearts to
 change.
 5156

Thus Hercules, astoned and ashamed,
 Onto Bochas shewed his presence,
 Seide, "allas! my knyhtod is diffamed
 Bi a ful fals amerous pestilence,
 So sore constreyned bi mortal violence,
 Wherbi, allas, my manhod was applied,
 Be sleithe off women oppressid & maistried,

5160 But Hercules
 stood ashamed
 before Bochas
 and said, "Alas,
 my knighthood
 was tarnished,
 for I shaved my
 beard and wore
 woman's dress
 for love of
 Iole,
 5164

To take ther habite & clothe me in ther weede,
 To shaue my berd and farse my visage
 With oynementis, ageyn[es] al manheede,
 To make it souple, & chaungid my language;
 And to compleyne mor off myn outrage,
 Vpon my fyngris, fyue twies told,
 I hadde ryngis richeli wrouht off gold.

5168

Thus was my corage chaungid femynyne
 For loue off oon callid Yole,
 Off condiciouns thouh she were serpentyne,
 Me thouhte she was so fair vpon to see,
 That al my ioie was with hire to be;
 And that non sholde apparceyue my trespase,
 I chaungid bothe habite, look and face,

5176 though she
 were of a ser-
 pentine
 disposition.
 5180

5152. his herte] heroff bere R. 5155. power] nature R.
 5156. languages R. 5157. visages R.
 5158. tenchaunge] to eschaunge R.
 5160. astonyed R.
 5168. shaue] shere R — farse] force R.
 5170. chaunge R.
 5177. so fair] fayrest R.

"I did this that
I might ap-
proach her
freely; but it
has ruined my
good name.

And was a woman outward in apparence,
Off entent to haue mor liberte
To vse my lustis, and haue experience
Off appetitis which that onleefful be. 5184
Wheroff the sclaundre reboundeth onto me,
That I dar seyn, myn outragous trespase
Doth al my knyhtod & my prowesse difface.

"Wherefore,
Bochas, tell
my misfortunes
as they were in
deed, so that
others, hearing
of them, may
amend their
vicious lives.
Even wise men
may profit by
the example of
fools."

Wherefore, O Bochas, I pray the tak good heede 5188
For to descryue in termys pleyne and cleer
Myn infortune, riht as it was in deede,
That whan other conceyue the maneer
Off myn onhappis, contagious for to heer, 5192
Thei may bexauple off me doon ther peyne,
From vicious liff ther hertis to restreyne.

For these foolis that al wisdam despise,
And be contrarie* to vertuous disciplyne, 5196
May yiue exauple to folkis that be wise,
And been to hem a lanterne off doctryne,
Vices teschewe and prudentli declyne
Fro flessfli lustis; for it is tauht in schoolis, 5200
That wise men been alday war be foolis."

Bochas thought
it would be
wrong to speak
of his vices
alone

Whan Bochas hadde conceyued the compleynt
Off Hercules in his appeeryng,
And how his noblesse bi women was atteynt 5204
Thoruh his pitous disordynat luyng,
He thouhte anon, hymselfe remembryng,
It hadde be routhe for taput in mynde
His viciis alle, and vertues lefft behynde. 5208

or in any way
to cast a slur
on his good
name.

Considred also it was inpertynent,
Outher bi language to write, ageyn al riht,
Any* thyng that sholde in sentement
The fame amenuse off so noble a knyht, 5212
Or to discrece in ony manys siht
His glorious prowesse, sith poetes for his werreis
Reisen his renoun so hih aboute the sterreis.

5181. R omits to 5348, leaf lost between 32 and 33.

5188. Wherefore] wher of H, P, H 5.

5191. maneer] mateere H, matter R 3, P.

5196. contraire B.

5201. been alday war] al dai ben tauht J, H 5.

5207. taput] ta be put H, to put J, H 5, to have put P.

5209. impertinent P.

5211. Any] And B, H, P, A R 3.

For he was bothe knyht and philisophre,
 And for his strengthe callid a geaunt;
 For comoun profit he proudli gan eek profre,
 Off manli corage yaff therto ful graunt,
 Tentre in Egipt &* slen ther the tiraunt
 Callid Busiris, which off ful fals entente
 Slouh all straungers that thoruh his kyngdam wente.

5216 Hercules was
 both a philoso-
 pher and a
 knight.

5220

For vnder a colour off liberalite,
 To his paleis he gladli wolde calle
 Straungers echon that cam thoruh his contre,
 And sollempneli receyue hem oon and alle,
 And lich a kyng, bothe in chaumbre and halle
 Make hem such cheer in alle maner thyng,
 As appertened onto a worthi kyng.

5224 He slew
 Busiris in
 Egypt, who
 treacherously
 murdered his
 guests

5228

But whil his gestis lay a-nyht and sleep,
 This fals[e] tiraunt, in ful cruel wise,
 Moordred hem echon or thei toke* keep;
 And afftir that — this was eek his gise —
 With ther blood to make a sacrefise
 To Iubiter, god off that contre,
 Off hool entent to plesse his deite,

5232 and offered up
 their blood to
 Jove, that he
 might send rain
 to his kingdom.

5236

That in his kyngdam, on frutis & on greyn [p. 65]
 The land tencrece bi gret[e] habundaunce,
 Doun from heuene he wolde sende hem reyn.
 This mene he made and this fals cheuysaunce,
 To moordre and slen he hadde so gret plesaunce;
 For off alle thynges hym* thouhte it dede him* good
 To slayen* straungers and to sheede ther blood.

5240

But whan this moordre off Busiris was kouth,
 That no straunger myht passe his lond in pes,
 This manli knyht, yit flouryng in his youth,
 This noble famous, this worthi Hercules,
 Amonges other put hymself in pres,
 And lich a gest outward in shewyng
 Cam to the paleis off Busiris the kyng,

5244 But Hercules
 went to his
 palace

5248

5220. &] to B, J — in] in to J — ther the tiraunt] þe geant
 J, H 5.

5232. token B. 5236. hool] om. H.

5238. tencrece] encreased H 5, P.

5242. off] om. P — hym] he B — him] hem B.

5243. slayen] slen B — slayen straungers and to sheede] mur-
 dere his gestis and shede J, H 5.

and after rebuk-
ing him, killed
him and set
Egypt in ease.

Rebuked hym off his gret outrage
Doon to his gestis bi cruel violence. 5252

And for to make pesible that passage,
And for to auenge his inportable offence,
And off his moordre to make recompence,
This Hercules slouh Busiris* in deede, 5256
And took the blood which he dede bleede,

Offrid it vp Iubiter to plese,
For this victorie hym to magnesie;
And al Egypt thus was set in ese: 5260
Ther lond, ther frutis gan also multeplie,
Ther greyn encrece a-boute on ech partie
And to habounde bi influence off reyn,
Which affortyme off vitale was bareyn. 5264

He also slew
Antæus, who
renewed his
strength each
time he touched
the earth.

¶ Another geaunt callid Antheus,
Kyng off Libie, and gouerned al that lond,
Whom Hercules, most strong & coraious,
Whilom outraied [&] slouh hym with his hond; 5268
For as thei wrastlid, bexperience he fond,
Touchyng therthe this geaunt, it is trewe,
His force, his myht dede alwey renewe.

But whan Hercules the maner dede espie, 5272
How his strengthe renewed ageyn so offte,
Ther ageyns he shoop a remedie:
Hie in the hair he reised hym vp a-loffte;
And with his armys, hard & nothyng soffte, 5276
Bak and bonys so sore he dede enbrace,
That he fill ded toforn hym in the place.

Some books
say that An-
tæus was in-
vincible in his
own kingdom,

But summe bookis off this geaunt telle,
Withynne his kyngdam who dede hym assaile, 5280
He wolde off newe his cheualrie compelle
Effte ageyn to meete hym in bataile;
And in this wise ful seelde he dede faile
Tafforce off newe, as folk shal vndirstonde, 5284
His strengthe, his myht all enmyes to withstonde.

and that Her-
cules enticed
him away from
its borders and
thus defeated
him.

But Hercules off hih discrecioun,
The feeld on hym manli to recure,
Hadde hym be sleihte out off his regioun; 5288
And as thei mette theer off auenture,
The said Antheus myht[e] nat endure,

5253. that] the H. 5256. Bisiris B. 5267. &] & most H.
5269. he] om. H. 5276. his] om. H.

But was disconfited bi Hercules anon,
Maugre his myht, he and his men echon.

5292

¶ Afftir this conquest Hercules is gon,
For exercise his prowess for to vse,
Ageyn the myhti stronge* Gerion,
Kyng off Spaigne, off Malliagre & Ebuse,
The which[e] tirant myhte hym nat excuse,
That al his labour, as poetis do compile,
Was fro these rewmys his peeple* to exile.

5296

Hercules next
conquered and
slew Geryon of
Spain, who had
exiled all his
people;

His tyrannye ne myht nat longe endure;
For Hercules, the noble worthi knyht,
Made vpon hym a gret disconfiture,
And slouh the tirant as thei mette in fht.
And afftir that, he, thoruh his grete myht,
Off his prowess and magnanymyte
Slouh Cerberus with his hedis thre.

5300

¶ The famous boole off the lond off Crete,
Which that destroyed al that regioun,
He slouh also whan thei dede meete;
And in Nemea he slouh a fers leoun,
And for a record off his hih renoun,
Off manli force his skyn away he took,
And to his bodi a coote theroff he shoop:

5304

and afterwards
he killed
Cerberus.

To all his enmyes to shewe hym mor dreedful,
Therefore he werid that hidous garnement.
And for in armys he neuer was founde dull,
But euer ilich[e] fressh in his entent,
Into a mounteyn he made anon his went,
Callid Erimantus; and ther in his passage
He slouh a boor, most wilde & most sauage.

5308

He also slew
the Cretan Bull
and the
Nemean Lion,
of whose skin
he made a
coat,

5312

Beside a ryuer callid Stiphalus,
Off furious birdis he slouh a gret[e] noumbre;
Withynne the kyngdam off kyng Fyneus
Al the contre for thei dede encoumbre:
For with ther shadwe & outraious ouble,
On seed or frutis whereuer thei aliht,
Al was deuoured in eueri manys siht.

5316

the Eryman-
thian Bear,

5320

¶ Vpon the mounteyn callid Auentyne,
Which is nat ferr fro Rome the cite,
Ther is a wode, as cronycles determyne,

[p. 66]

the
Stymphallian
Birds,

5324

5328

5295. stronge] straunge B, strange H. 5296. Malliagre] Baleares P.
5299. peeple] peeplis B, H. 5315. garment H. 5326. or frutis] on frute H.

and Cacus,
the giant of
Mt. Aventine,

Riht fressh off siht and goodli on to see.
And Hercules passyng bi that contre,
Fro Spayneward goyng be Ytaile,
Cachus the geaunt dede hym ther assaile.

5332

who stole his
cattle and hid
them in a cave,

Whil Hercules among the leues greene
Leide hym to slepe, off sodeyn auenture,
And his beestis ageyn the sonne sheene,
Whil that he slepte, wente in ther pasture,
Cam Cachus foorth, ful hidous off stature,
Thouhte he wolde these beestis with hym haue,
Stal hem echon and hid hem in a caue.

5336

dragging them
backwards by
the tail, like a
thief.

And lik a theeff he made hem go bakward,
That no man sholde the traxis off hem knowe,
Nor off ther passage haue no reward;
For bi ther tailis he ladde hem on a rowe
Into his caue, which that stood ful lowe.
And for thei wern off excellent fairnesse,
To keepe hem cloos he dede his besynesse.

5344

Hercules heard
their lowing

Out off his slep whan Hercules awook
And aparceyued his oxes were away,
He roos hym up, and caste aboute his look,
Gan tespie in al the haste he may
To what parti the traxis off hem lay.
And whil he stood thus musyng in the shade,
[He] herde lowyng that his oxes made.

5348

and, finding the
cave, overcame
Cacus and slew
him.

And bi ther lowyng he gan anon approche
Toward the parti wher thei were kept ful cloos,
Fond the caue vnder a myhti roche;
And proude Cachus, which hadde hem in depoos,
Geyn Hercules he sturdili aroos:
But for al that, he myht hymself nat* saue,
For he hym slouh at thentre off the caue.

5356

5360

He then cleared
Mt. Aventine of
brigands.

And thus his beestis he hath ageyn recurid,
That sempste afforn irrecuperable.
Afftir the mounteyn be force he hath assurid,

5364

5332. that] the H. 5333. be] fro H.
5346. ful] so H.
5350. parceyued R, perceived J — oxen H, P.
5351. hym] om. R. 5352. Bigan to espie R.
5355. He] om. H — the lowyng P, H 5 — oxen P.
5360. Ayens R. 5361. myhtnat himself B.
5364. irrecuperable R. 5365. hath] hast H.

Which for brigantis afor was ful doutable;
 But bi his manhod it was maad habitable,
 That men myhte, for dreed off any fo,
 Whan euer thei wolde freli come or go.

5368

¶ Touchyng his conquest vpon Femynye,
 Geyn Amazones with Theseus he wente,
 The queen Ypolita thoruh his cheualrie,
 For his parti anon to hym he hente.
 And Ypolita off ful trewe entente
 Gaff onto hym in tokne off victorie
 Off gold a girdil to haue hir in memorie.

5376

When he went
 to Femynye,
 Hippolyte
 presented him
 with her golden
 girdle.

¶ Afftir to Affrik he wente a ful gret pas,
 Onli off purpos the gardeyn for to see,
 Which appertened to [the] kyng Athlas,
 That brothir was to kyng Promothe,
 In astrologie ful weel expert was he.
 And in this gardeyn, off which I ha[ue] you told,
 The riche braunchis and applis were off gold,

5380

Afterwards, in
 Africa, he slew
 a serpent in
 King Atlas'
 garden and
 fetched away
 the Golden
 Apples of the
 Hesperides.

Thoruh magik maad bi gret auisement,
 Ful streihtly* kept and closid enviroun,
 And Iwachchid with a fell serpent,
 That no man entred that riche mansioun.
 But Hercules, most myhti off renoun,
 The serpent slouh throuh his manli pursuit,
 And fro that gardeyn he bar away the fruit.

5384

5388

This seid Athlas, as bookis specefie,
 And poetis eek off hym endite,
 He was ful cunnyng in astronomie
 And theryn dede ful gretli hym* delite;
 And many a book he made & dede write
 With gret labour and gret[e] dilligence
 In his tyme vpon that science,

5392

Atlas was a
 learned astron-
 omer who
 wrote many
 valuable
 books,

5396

The which[e] wern mor precious than gold,
 And mor riche in his opynyoun.
 But Hercules, in soth as it is told,

5400

which Hercules
 seized and
 brought to
 Greece.

5367. manhod] knyhtode R.

5371. Ayens R.

5373. parti] pray R. 5376. hir] om. R.

5380. the kyng R, H, J.

5383. streihtly] streiht B, R, streiet J, streite P. 5389. The]

Ther H.

5392. eek off hym] of hym also R. 5393. ful] om. R.

5394. hym ful gretli B. 5398. than] that R.

Gat alle the bookis thoruh his hih renoun,
 Bar hem bi force out off that regioun;
 And into Grece, lich a conquerour,
 With hym he brouhte for a gret tresour.

5404

In Thrace he
 slew Diomedes,
 who fed his
 horses with
 human flesh.

Off Trace he slouh the tirant outraious
 That whilom was callid Diomede,
 Which moordred al that cam in[to] his hous,
 And with ther flessch his hors he dede feede.
 And thoruh his witt, labour and manheede,
 Off Achelaus, which was a gret[e] wonder,
 He made the stremys for to parte assonder;

[p. 67]

5408

He parted the
 Achelous,
 which before
 that time had
 done great
 damage.

And bi his wisdam dede hem so deuide,
 In too parties disseueryng his passage:
 For tofortyme no man myhte abide
 Off his cours the* furious fell outrage;
 For in contrees it dede so gret damage,
 Turnyng vpward, ther was noon othir boote,
 Where it flowed, off trees cropp and roote.

5412

5416

He next slew
 all but one of
 the horrible
 serpents of
 Lake Lerna.

A gret emprise he dede eek vndirtake,
 Whan that the [wor]mees, hidous & horrible,
 Aryued up off Archadie in the lake
 Callid Lerne, the beestis ful odible,
 Which with ther teeth & mouthes ful terrible
 Frut, greyn and corn dede mōrtali deuoure;
 But Hercules, the contre to socoure,

5420

5424

Cam lik a knyht ther malice for to lette;
 And bi his prudence destroied hem euerichon.
 Withynne the lake the wermys up he shette,
 Sauff among alle behynde was lefft on;
 And ageyn hym this Hercules anon
 Off knyththod cauhte so gret auauntage,
 That to the contre he dede no mor damage.

5428

5432

No one ever
 had more fame
 or excellence in
 arms;

Thus al that euere may rehersed be
 Touchyng knyththod, prowess or prudence,
 Glorious fame or long felicite,
 This knyhtli man hadde most excellence,
 And in armys lengest experience.

5436

5405. tirant] Geaunt R. 5406. whilom] sumtyme R.

5411. departe R. 5415. the] and the B.

5420. wormees] mees B, H, P, mes R, J, H 5, wormees R 3.

5435. Glorious] by glorious H.

For his tryumphes and actis marciall
Sette up pilers for a memoriall,

Which remembrid his conquestis most notable,
And his deedis bi grauyng dede expresse —
Beyond which no lond is habitable,
So ferr abrod spradde his hih noblesse.

5440 and as a memorial to his martial deeds he set up the Pillars of Gades.

But as the sonne lesith his brihtnesse
Sumwhile whan he is fresshest in his speer,
With onwar cloudis that sodenli appeer,

5444

Semblabli the noblesse and the glory
Off Hercules in this onstable liff
Eclipsid was and shadwid his memory
Bi Deianira, that whilom was his wiff:
For bi hir fraude cam in the mortal striff,
As ye shal heere the maner and the cas,
Wherbi that he loste his liff, allas.

5445 Yet the glory of Hercules was tarnished by the fraud of his wife Deianeira.

Yit for hir sake, this most manli man*
Fauht, as I fynde, a synguler bataile
With Achelous, sone off the occian,
Lik as poetis make rehearsaile.

5452

5456 although he fought Achelous, son of the ocean, for her sake.

And as ech other proudli dede assaile,
This Hercules, off knythod souereyne,
Rente from his hed oon off his hornys tweyne.

5460

Off kyng Oene she was the douhter deere,
To Hercules ioyned in mariage;
And as thei cam to a gret ryuere
With sturdi waves, wher was no passage,
Nessus, the geaunt, ougli off visage,
To Hercules profred his seruise,
And ful falsli ageyn hym gan deuise.

5464 She was daughter of King Oeneus; and once when she and Hercules came to a river, the giant Nessus offered to carry her across,

Made his promys to Hercules in deede,
To putte his liff in gret auenture,
Ouer the strem Deianire to leede,
Because he was large off his stature.
And for she was a riht fair creature,
Whan thei were passid and Icome to londe,
Nessus falsli wolde vpon the stronde

5468 but when they arrived at the other side, he attempted her virtue, and Hercules wounded him mortally with an arrow.

5472

5443. his hih] is his H, his J, H 5.

5449. shadowde R. 5450. whilom] sumtyme R.

5451. the] om. H, P, R 3. 5453. that] om. H.

5454. This stanza is transposed with the next B, H.

5458. other] om. R. 5460. Rente] Sent R — hornys] armys R.

5461. Oeme R, J. 5462. in] bi R. 5467. ayens R.

Ha[ue] knowe hir flessli, lik as writ Ouide,
Hercules hauyng theroff a siht, 5476
As he abood vpon the tother side.

And for tauenge hym off his grete onriht,
Took his bowe and bente it anon riht,
And with an arwe, filid sharp & grounde, 5480
Gaff to Nessus his dedli fatal wounde.

His last request was that
Deianeira give
his blood-stained
shirt to Hercules,

Lich a conduit gushed out the blood,
And whan he sauh that he muste deie,
To Deianeira afforn hym ther she stood, 5484
With al his herte hire he gan to preie,
That in o thyng his lust she wolde obeie,
To take his sherte, and be nat rech[e]lles,
With blood disteyned, and sende it Hercules, 5488

so that he and
she might be
reconciled.
But when Hercules
put it on
it burnt him so
terribly

Therwith to hym to be reconcilid. [p. 68]
And she the sherte to hym anon hath sent,
Thoruh whos venym, alas, he was begilid!
For what be touchyng, & what benchauntement, 5492
His flessch, his bonys furiousli were brent,
And among his dedli peynes alle,
Into a rage he sodenli is falle.

that he ran
about like a
madman, up-
rooted trees,
broke the
horns of cattle
and gnawed
their bones, and
thus came to
his end.

[And] as a beeste furiousli he ran 5496
On valis, hillis among the craggi stonys,
Semblabli as doth a wood[e] man,
Pullid up trees & rootis al attonys,
Brak beestis hornys, & al tognew ther bonys. 5500
Was it nat pite that a knyht so good
Sholde among beestis renne sauagyne & wood!

It was all because
he trusted in
women. Alas,
that courage,
wisdom, discretion,
learning
and philosophy
should have
been darkened
by their sleight!

Thus ouerwhelmyd was al his worthynesse,
And to declyn wente his prosperite. 5504
And cause & roote off al his wrechidnesse,
Was for that he sette his felicite
To truste so moche the mutabilite
Off these women, which erli, late & soone 5508
Off ther nature braide vpon the moone.

5475. lik] *om.* H. 5481. fatall dedly H. 5482. guyssshed R.
5483. sauh] *size* J. 5484. to forn R.
5485. gan] began R, bigan J, biganne H 5 — to] *om.* J.
5493. were] was R, H. 5496. And] *om.* H.
5497. On] In H — valeis R, valeys P, valeies H 5.
5502. sauagyne] sauage R, J, R 3, P, H 5.
5503. was] as R. 5505. al] *om.* R. 5506. his] al his R.
5508. late] *om.* R.

Allas, alas! al noblesse & prudence,
 Prowesse off armys, force & cheualrie,
 Forsihte off wisdam, discrecioun & science, 5512
 Vertuous studie, profityng in clergie,
 And the cleer shynyng off philosophie,
 Hath thoruh fals lustis been heeraform manacid,
 Be sleihte off women dirkid and diffacid! 5516

O Hercules, my penne I feele quake,
 Myn ynke fullillid off bittir teris salte,
 Thi[s] pitous tragedie to write for thi sake,
 Whom alle poetis glorefie and exalte; 5520
 But fraude off women made thi renoun halte,
 And froward muses thi tryumphes al toreende,
 For to descryue, alas, thi fatal eende.

Hercules, my
 pen trembles,
 my ink is
 filled with
 bitter tears
 when I write
 your history.

[Lenvoye.]

THE soote venym, the sauouri fals poisoun, 5524
 The dreedful ioie, the dolerous plesaunce,
 The woful gladnesse, *with* furious resoun,
 Feith disespeired, ay stable in variaunce,
 Vertu exilyng, where lust hath gouernaunce, 5528
 Thoruh fals luxurie diffacen al noblesse,
 As this tragedie can bere ful weel witenesse.

This tragedy
 bears witness
 to the ruin
 wrought by
 licentiousness.

Wher froward Venus hath dominacioun,
 And blynde Cupide his subiectis doth auaunce, 5532
 And wilful lust thoruh indiscrecioun
 Is chose iuge to holden the ballaunce,
 Ther chois onlefful hath thoruh onhappi chaunce
 Dirkid off pryncis the famous hih prowesse, 5536
 As this tragedie can bere ful weel witenesse.

Where Venus
 and Cupid rule,
 the fame of
 princes is dark-
 ened.

O thou Hercules, for al thyn hih renoun,
 For al thi conquest and knyhtli suffisaunce,
 Thou* were thoruh women brouht to confusioun 5540
 And thoruh ther fraude thi renommed puissaunce
 Disclaundred was and brouht onto myschaunce.

Hercules, I am
 ashamed to say
 that, for all
 your high re-
 noun, you were
 brought to
 confusion by
 women.

5511. armys] nature R.

5514. off] of al R. 5515. lust H — her afor be R.

5517. O] *om.* R. 5518. off] *with* R. 5519. This] Thi H.

5521. But] by H.

5526. The] *om.* R — *with* the R, J, H 5 — resoun] tresoun H.

5527. dispeired R.

5535. chois] chose R. 5536. prowesse] noblesse R.

5538. thyn] thy H.

5540. Thou were] Thouh thou were B, Thoruh werre R.

I were ashamed to write it or expresse,
Except this tragedie can bere me weel wisesse. 5544

Princes, let no
false sorceress
lead you into
temptation.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, off hih discrecioun
This thyng enprentith in your remembraunce;
Off othres fallyng make your proteccioun,
You to preserue thoruh prudent purueiaunce; 5548
Afforn prouyded, that your perseueraunce
Be nat perturbid bi no fals sorceresse,
As this tragedie off other berth wisesse.

[A processe, of Narcissus, Biblis, Mirra and of othir
ther onfortunys to Bochas compleynyng.]¹

Narcissus,
Byblis and
Myrrha declare
their unhappi-
ness to Bochas.

NARCISUS, Biblis & Mirra, alle thre 5552
Tofor Bochas dede pitousli appeere,
Ther infortunyes, ther infelicite
To hym compleynyng with a dedli cheere.
And off ther comyng to telle the manere, 5556
Narcissus first, with sorwe & dool atteynt,
Gan first off alle declaren his compleynt.

Narcissus, son
of Cepheissus
and Liriope,
was born of
gentle blood
and the fairest
of creatures.

He was [the] sone off Cepheissus* the flood,
And his mooder callid Liriope, 5560
And bi discent born off gentil blood,
Off creatures fairest on to see;
And, as I fynde, at his natyuite
Tiresias,* be sperit off prophesie, 5564
Touchyng his fate thus gan specifice:

Tiresias fore-
told that his
life would end
when he first
beheld his own
face, and that
many a girl
would love him
in vain, for no
woman was
beautiful
enough to please
him.

The goddis han prouydid hym a space
To lyue in erthe, and so longe endure
Til that he knowe & see his owne face; 5568
And for his sake ful many creature,
Bi ordynaunce off God and off Nature,
Whan thei hym seen shal feelyn ful gret peyne,
Yiff thei in loue his grace may nat atteyne. 5572

5543. it] *om.* R — to expresse R. 5544. me] full H.

5546. enprinted R. 5550. soceresse R.

5551. berth] beris H. 5553. Iohn Bochas H. 5558. Bigan R.

5559. 1st the] *om.* H — Cepheissus] Thephesus B, H, R 3 —
off] to H.

5560. linope R. 5564. Thiresias B.

5565. MSS. R, J, H 5 transpose lines 5846-73 and the Envoy
(5873-5901) with lines 5566-5845.

5566. Opposite this stanza the following rubric in MS. J: Ouidius
X^o. et XI^o. de transformatis. 5566. for hym R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 29 recto.

But he shal be contrarie* & daungerous, [p. 69]

And off his port ful off straungenesse,
And in his herte [riht] inli surquedous,
Bi thoccasioun off his natif fairnesse; 5576
And, presumyng off his semlynnesse,
Shal thynke no woman so fresh nor fair of face,
That able were to stonden in his grace.

And for the excellence off his gret beute, 5580
He hym purposid in his tendre age,
Neuer in his liff weddid for to be —
He thouhte hymself so fair off his visage.
For which he cast hym, throuh his gret outrage, 5584
Ageyn all lustis off loue to disdeyne,
To hunte at beestis alone and be soleyne.

And in this while that he kepte hym so
In forestis and in wildirnesse, 5588
A water goddesse, that callid was Echcho,
Loued hym ful hote for his gret fairnesse;
And secreli dede hir besynesse
To folwe his steppis riht as any lyne, 5592
To hir desirs to make hym to enclyne.

He herde hir weel, but he sauh hir nouht,
Wheroff astonyd, he gan anon tenquere,
As he that was amerueilid in his thouht, 5596
Saide euene thus, "is any wiht now heere?"
And she ansuerde the same, in hir manere,
What-euer he saide, as longeth to Echcho,
Withoute abod she seide the same also. 5600

"Come neer," quod he, and began to calle.
"Come ner," quod she, "my ioie & my plesaunce."

He lokid aboute [among] the rokkis alle
And sauh nothyng beside nor in distaunce; 5604
But she abraide, declaryng hir greuaunce,
And to hym seide, "myn owyn herte deere,
Ne be nat straunge, but late us duelle ifeere."

And so it
turned out.
Early in life
he thought
himself
too handsome
to marry and
became a
hunter.
But a water-
nymph named
Echo, attracted
by his great
beauty,
followed
him, calling.

Yet he saw no
one; and
whatever he
said, she
answered
in the same
words.

"My own dear
heart, let us
dwell
together."

5573. contraire B.

5577. semblenness R. 5578. Shal thynke] *om.* R.

5581. purposid hym R. 5582. for] *om.* H.

5583. his] *om.* R. 5586. soleyne] slayne R.

5591. secreli] sikyryly R. 5593. Inclayne R.

5595. began R. 5600. also] hym to R.

5603. the] thes R.

5605. & declaryng R. 5607. but] *om.* H.

"No," he replied, "I'd rather die, go away and don't speak to me any more."

"Nay, nay," quod he, "I will nothyng obeie
To your desirs, for short conclusioun;
For leuere I hadde pleyntli for to deie,
Than ye sholde haue off me possessioun;
We be nothyng off on opynyoun,
I heere you weel, thowh I no figure see,
Goth forth your way & spek no mor to me!"

Ashamed, she hid herself in a cave. Since that time men have heard her voice, but she has never been seen.

And she ashamed fledde hir way anon,
As she that myhte off hym no socour haue.
But disespiered, this Echcho is fourth gon
And hidde hirsilff in an ougli caue
Among the rokkis, as beried in hir graue.
And thowh so be that men hir vois may heere,
Afftir that tyme she neuer dede appeere.

The gods were angry with Narcissus for his cruelty to Echo,

And thus Narcisus thoru daunger and disdeyn
Vpon this lady dede crueli vengauce.
But whan the goddis his cruelte han seyn,
Towardis hym thei fill in gret greuauce,
Off his vnmerci thei hadden displesaunce;
And riht as he merciles was founde,
So with onmerci he cauhte his dedli wounde.

For al daunger displesith to Venus,
And al disdeyn is lothsum to Cupide:
For who to loue is contrarious,
The God of Loue will quite hym on sum side,
His dreedful arwis so mortali deuyde
To hurte & mayme alle that* be rech[e]lles,
And in his seruise founde* merciles.

and as he was so disdainful they resolved to punish him.

And for Narcisus was nat merciable
Toward Echcho, for his gret beute,
But in his port was founden ontretable,
Cupide thouhte he wolde auengid be,
As he that herde hir praier off pite,
Causyng Narcisus to feele & haue his part
Off Venus brond and off hir firi dart.

5614. &] ye R — to] with R.

5617. dispeired R. 5619. as] and R.

5621. dede] durst R

5622. Rubric in J, leaf 29 d: "How Narcissus, Biblis, and Mirra, deied atte mischeff." Misplaced owing to transposition of stanzas.

5623. this] the R. 5624. had R. 5634. that] tho B.

5635. be founde B.

And on a day whan he in wildirnesse
 Hadde afftir beestis ronne on huntyng,
 And for long labour gan falle in werynesse,
 He was desirous to ha[ue] sum refresshyng;
 And wonder thrustleuh afftir trauailyng,
 Miht nat endure lengere ther to duelle;
 And atte laste he fond a cristal welle,

5644 One day,
 wearied by the
 chase and very
 thirsty, he
 found a spring,
 and seeing a
 most angelic
 image reflected
 in the still
 water

Riht fressh spryngyng & wonder agreable,
 The watir lusti and delectable off siht:
 And for his thrust was to hym inportable,
 Vpon the brynkis he fill down anon riht,
 And be reflexioun, myd off the watir briht
 Hym thouhte he sauh a passyng fair ymage
 To hym appeere, most aungelik off visage.

5652

5656

He was enamoured with the semlynesse,
 And desirous theroff to stonde* in grace;
 And yit it was nat but a likenesse,*
 And but a shadwe reflectyng off his face,
 The which off feruence amerausli tenbrace,
 This Narcissus with a pitous compleynt
 Sterte into the welle & hymseluen dreynt.

[p. 70] tried to em-
 brace it in his
 arms and fell
 in and was
 drowned.

5660

And thus his beute, allas, was leid ful lowe,
 His semlynesse put ful ferre a-bak;
 Thus whan that he gan first hymself to knowe
 And seen his visage, in which ther was no lak,
 Presumptuous pride causid al to gon to wrak:
 For who to moch doth off hymself presume,
 His owne vsurpyng will sonest hym consume.

5664 That was the
 end of Narcis-
 sus's beauty.
 Presumptuous
 pride caused
 his fall.

5668

And fynali, as poetis telle,
 This Narcissus, withoute mor socour,
 Afftir that he was drowned atte welle,
 The heuenli goddis dede hym this fauour,
 Thei turned hym into a fressh[e] flour,

5672 After his death
 the gods
 turned him
 into a water
 lily; and books
 say that it is a
 good remedy
 for sudden
 fevers.

5644. ronne on] runen in R. 5646. sum] om. R.
 5647. wonder] om. P, R 3 — thrustleuh] theugh seluth R 3.
 5651. delitable R. 5652. importable R, H.
 5654. myd] in myddis R.
 5657. with] for H, R 3 — semblynesse R.
 5658. to stonde theroff B. 5659. likenesse] liklynesse B.
 5663. hymseluen dreynt] hym silff he dreynt R, hym silff
 dreynt H, so himsilf he dreynt J. 5664. ful] om. H.
 5668. to gon] go R.
 5671. as] as thes olde R, as pese oolde H, as these P, as theis
 olde H 5.
 5673. a] a ful R.

A watir-lelie, which doth remedie
In hote accessis, as bookis speciefe. 5676

Byblis appeared
next, together
with her brother
Caunus

AFFTIR Narcisus was at the well[e] dreynt,
And to Iohn Bochas declared hadd his wo,
Biblis appered, with teris al bespreynt, 5680
And toward hym a gret pas she gan go;
And hir brother Caunus* cam also,
And off o wombe as gemellis tweyne;
But she toforn hir fate gan compleyne. 5684

whom she loved
against nature
and law.

She in hir loue was nat vertuouus,
For ageyn God and Kyndis ordynauce,
She loued hir brother that callid was Caunus*;
And whan he sauh hir froward gouernaunce, 5688
He onto hire gaff non attendaunce,
Thouh she off sleihte tacomplisshe hir entent,
In secre wise a pistil to hym sent.

He would not
listen to her,

although she
wrote him a
letter saying
that she would
die unless he
assented.

She seide it was an impossible thyng 5692
Withoute his grace hirseluē for to saue,
[And] but he were to hire assentyng,
She ellis pleynli may non helthe haue
But onli deth, and afftirward hir graue. 5696
Thus in hir writyng, to hym she dede attame;
And to be couert she ne wrot no name.

He paid no
attention to it,
and Byblis
wept so per-
sistently that
the gods
finally turned
her into a
fountain.

But whan this pistil cam to his presence,
Vertuouusli therat he gan disdeyne, 5700
And gaff therto no maner aduertence,
Nor took non heed off hir furious peyne,
But suffred hir eternali to pleyne
Til that she was, as Ouide can weel telle, 5704
With offte wepyngis transformed to a welle.

Myrrha un-
naturally loved
her father
Cinyras, and

NEXT cam Mirra with face ful pitous,
Which that whilom loued ageyn nature
Hir owne fadir callid Cinarus, 5708

5676. lelie] like R (*corrected in later hand to lillie*).

5678. Afftir pat H. 5679. hadd] *om.* R.

5682. Cannus B, Canus R, Cammus H, Cannus J, Caunus P.

5687. Cannus B — callid was] *om.* J.

5688. he] she R — gouernaunce] greuaunce R.

5691. secre] sikir R. 5700. therat he gan] began ther at R.

5702. Nor] Neither R, J, *om.* H — non] nouthir noon H.

5705. wepyng R. 5707. whilom] sum tyme R.

For whos sake gret peyne she dede endure.
But she ne durste hir sorwe nat discure,
Til hir norice be signes dede espie
The hertli constreynt off hir maladie.

5712

For hir norice, off which that I ha[ue] told,
Conceyued hath, bi open euidence,
As she that koude bothe off newe and old
In such materis al hool thexperience,
That thoruh long labour & sleiht diligence,
Dyuers meenes & weies out she souhte,
To hir fadres bed that she Mirra brouhte.

5716

her nurse so
contrived that
she accom-
plished her
desire,

With whom she hadde hir lust & hir plesaunce;
For she onknowe lay with hym al nyht:
He was deceyued bi drunckleuh ignoraunce,
And on the morwe, longe or any liht,
She stal away and went out off his siht.
With hir norice kepte hir longe cloos,
Til onto tyme that hir wombe aroos.

5720

deceiving him
when drunk.

But hir fadir, that was off Cipre kyng,
Which, as I tolde, was callid Cinarus,
Whan he the trouthe espied off this thyng:
That bi his douhter he was deceyued thus,
She wex to hym lothsum and odious,
Fledde from his face, so sore she was afferd,
And he pursued afftir with his suerd.

5724

5728

But as she
became preg-
nant, her
father found it
out and was so
angry that he
chased her all
the way to

In Arabie, the hoote myhti lond,
Kyng Cinarus hath his douhter founde,
And crueli he gan enhaunse his hond,
With his suerd tayouen hir a wounde;
But the goddis, off merci most habounde,
Han fro the deth[e] maad hire [to] go fre,
And thoruh ther power transfourmed to a tre.

5732

5736

Arabia, and
would have
slain her had
not the gods
transformed
her into a tree,

Whiche afftir hire berith yit the name,
Callid Mirra, as she was in hir liff.
Out off which, as auctours sey the same,
Distillith a gomme, a gret preseruatif,
And off nature a ful good defensiff,

[p. 71]

5744

from which we
obtain myrrh,
that is very
useful for keep-
ing dead bodies
from cor-
rupting.

5710. But] For R. 5711. hir] his R.
5718. weyes and meenes R. 5722. droncklee R 3.
5725. hir longe] hir silff H. 5726. the tyme R, H.
5734. Arabia H. 5736. he gan] bigan R.
5737. tayouen] to yiffen R — his] hir H.
5738. off] om. R. 5743. as] om. R.

To keepe bodies from putrefaccioun
And hem fraunchise from al corrupcioun.

Myrrh is engendered by the sunbeams.

Bi influence off the sonne-bemys 5748
Mirre is engendrid, distillyng off his kynde
With rounde dropis ageyn[es] Phebus stremys,
And doun descendith thoruh the harde rynde.
And thoruh the riftis, also as I fynde, 5752
The said[e] Mirra hath a child foorth brouht,
In al this world, that yiff it be weel souht,

Myrrha's child was called Adonis, and Venus fell in love with him,

Was non so fair[e] fourmed bi nature;
For off his beute he was pereles. 5756
And as poetis recorden bi scripture,
He callid was the faire Adonydes;
And to his worshep and his gret encres —
For he off fairnesse bar awei the flour — 5760
Venus hym ches to been hir paramour.

and told him not to hunt beasts that were savage. But he paid no attention to her, and was killed by a wild boar,

The which[e] goddesse gaff to hym in charge,
That he sholde in his tendre age,
In forestis whil he wente at large, 5764
Hunte at no beestis which that were sauage;
But he contrary, to his disauauntage,
Thoruh wilfulnesse — I can sey you* no mor —
Was slayn onwarli off a tusshi bor, 5768

whereupon Venus turned him into a crimson flower.

At the whiche he felli dede enchace,
But off foli in veyn was his labour;
For he lay slayn, ful pale off cheer & face,
Whom Venus turned to a ful fressh[e] flour 5772
Which was as blood, lich purpil off colour,
A budde off gold with goodli leuys glade
Set in the myddis, whos beute may nat fade.

After Myrrha had withdrawn herself, Orpheus, an ugly man, appeared.

AND whan [that] Mirea fro Bochas was 5776
withdrawe,
And hadde declarid hir gret aduersite,
And off hir fate told the mortal lawe,
Cam Orpheus, ful ougli on to see,
Sone off Appollo and off Calliope, 5780

5764. at large] alarge R. 5767. you sey B.
5768. tusshi] tuskye R.
5773. as] a R — lich] of R, J — off] the R, pe J.
5778. hir] his R.

And appered with a ful doolful face,
Whilom brouht foorth and iborn in Trace.

Ful renommed in armys and science,
Famous in musik and in melodie,
And ful notable also in eloquence.

5784 He was famous
for his music
and eloquence.
Even the rivers
ceased to flow
when he sang.

And for his soote sugred armonie,
Beestis, foulis, poetis specefie,
Wodes, flodes off ther cours most strong,
Stynt of* ther cours to herkne his soote song.

5788

An harpe he hadde off Mercurius,
With the which Erudice he wan;
And to Bachus*, as writ Ouidius,
Sacrifises ful solempne he began,
And onto helle for his wiff he ran,
Hir to recure with soote touchis sharpe
Which that he made vpon his heuenli harpe.

5796

Mercury gave
him a harp,
with which he
won Eurydice
back from hell.

But whan that he this labour on hym took,
A lawe was maad[e] which that bond hym sore,
That yiff that he bakward caste his look,
He sholde hire lese & seen his wiff no more:
But it is seid[e] sithen gon ful yore,
Ther may no lawe louers weel constreyne,
So inportable is ther dedli peyne.

5800

He was not to
look behind,
else he would
lose her.

Yiff summe husbondis hadde stonden in the cas
Ta* lost her wyues for a look sodeyne,
Thei wolde ha[ue] suffred and nat seid allas,
But pacientli endured al ther peyne,
And thanked God, that broken was the cheyne
Which hath so longe hem* in prisoun bounde,
That thei be grace han such a fredam founde.

5804

But I think
there are some
husbands who,
if a sudden
look had lost
them their
wives,
would have
put up with it
very patiently
and thanked
God.

To lyn in prisoun, it is a ful gret charge,
And to be stokked vndir keie and lok;
It were weel meriere a man to gon at large,

5812

It is much
more pleasant
to be free
than nailed to
a block.

5781. appered] appeere H — ful] om. R.

5782. Whilom] Some tyme R. 5783. and] & in R, J, H 5.

5789. Synt of] Syntid B — ther] om. H 5. 5790. herpe H.

5792. Bachus] bochas B, R 3.

5793. ful solempne] solenne R.

5799. bakkard R. 5803. Importable H.

5805. Ta] To ha B — in MS. J. *opposite this stanza in a later hand: "a trew saying."*

5807. ther] the R. 5809. hem so longe B.

5811. lyn] ligge R, liue P. 5812. be] ly H.

5813. meriere] myrie R, merie J, mery H 5.

Than with irenes be nailed to a blok:
 And there is o bond, which callid is wedlok,
 Fretyng husbondis so sore, that it is wonder, 5816
 Which with no file may nat be broke assonder.

However, Orpheus loved Eurydice, and, after all, lost her,

But Orpheus, fadir off armonye,
 Thouhte Erudice, which was his wiff, so fair,
 For hir sake he felte he muste deie, 5820
 Because that he, whan* he made his repair,
 Off hir [in] trouthe enbracid nothyng but hair.
 Thus he lost hire, there is no mor to seyne;
 And for the constreynt off his greuous peyne, 5824

and never married again. He got off very easily. A man who once escapes the snare isn't apt to go back to it.

At his herte hir partyng sat so sore, [p. 72]
 The greene memorie*, the tendre remembraunce,
 That he neuer wolde wyuen more,
 So faire he was escapid his penaunce; 5828
 For wedlok is a liff off most plesaunce.
 But who hath onys infernal peynys seyn,
 Will neuer his thankis come in the snare ageyn.¹

Orpheus gave very important advice to husbands; he said that if one hell is bad, two are worse.

This Orpheus gaff counseil ful notable 5832
 To husbondis that han endurid peyne,
 To such as been prudent and trefable:
 Oon hell is dreedful, mor percilous be tweyne;
 And who is onys boundyn in a cheyne, 5836
 And may escapen out off daunger blyue —
 Yiff he resorte, God let hym neuer thryue!

But women were not edified by these words, and so they slew him at the festival of Bacchus.

On this sentence women wer vengable,
 And to his writyng ful contrarious, 5840
 Seide his counseil was nat comendable.
 At the feste thei halwed to Bachus,
 Thei fill echon vpon this Orpheus;
 And, for alle his rethoriques suete, 5844
 Thei slouh, allas, this laureat poete.

5814. Irnes R — to] *om.* R. 5815. And] But R, J, H 5.

5816. Fretyng] Fetteryng R.

5817. no] a R, J, H 5, P — nat] *om.* R 3.

5820. he felte] felte that R.

5821. that he whan] whan that B.

5822. in] *om.* R — no thyng enbracid R.

5826. memoire B. 5830. peyn R.

5835. mor] & more R.

5839. On] Vpon R. 5844. rethorik R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 30 verso, in red in margin: "Ob quam cām secundas spreuit nupcias."

And off his harpe yiff ye list to lere,
 The god Appollo maad a translacioun
 Among the ymages off the sterris cleere,
 5848 Wheroff men* may haue yit inspeccioun.
 But Fortune, to his confusioun,
 Denyed hym, froward off hir nature,
 Whan he was slayn fredam off sepulture.

You can see
 his harp in the
 sky, for Apollo
 translated it to
 the stars.

5852

NEXT Orpheus, ther dede appeere also
 Off Amazones worthi queenys tweyne,
 Marpesia and hir suster Lampedo,
 Which in conquest dede ther besi peyne,
 5856 And gret worship in armys dede atteyne,
 Namyng hemsilff, be writyng nyh and ferr,
 Douhtren to Mars, which is the God off Werr.

Two queens of
 the Amazons
 followed Or-
 pheus,

Marpesia rood out in regiouns
 And conquered ful many a gret cite,
 For couetise off gret possessiouns,
 Tencrece hir lordshepe, yiff it wolde be.
 And hir suster kepte surli ther contre
 5864 From alle enmyes, that ther was no doute,
 Whil Marpesia rood with hir host aboute.

5860 Marpesia and
 Lampedo.

But whil she was in conquest most famous
 And hir enmyes proudli dede assaile,
 Fortune anon wex contrarious,
 And causid she was slay[e]n in bataile.
 Loo, what conquest or victory may auaille,
 Whan that Fortune doth at hem disdeyne;
 5872 Seeth heer exaample bi these queenys tweyne.

5868 Marpesia was
 slain in battle,
 a common fate
 of conquerors.

¶ Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie remembrith thynges fyue:
 Off Narcisus thexcellent beute,
 And off Biblis doth also descryue
 5876 The grete luxur[y]e and dishoneste,
 Mirra diffamed, turned to a tre,

These
 tragedies shew
 that licentious-
 ness and pride
 are very far
 removed from
 virtue.

5846. *Opposite this stanza the following rubric in MS. J. leaf*

29 b. margin: "Ouidius X^o. et X]^o. de transformitis."

5846. lere] here R, J. 5847. god] god of R.

5849. men] man B, H — yit] clere J, H 5 — haue yit] yitte
 have cleer R.

5863. lordshippis H. 5865. From] Off R — that] so þat R.

5871. what] om. R. 5876. doth] deth R.

5877. luxurye] luxuride R.

Texemplefie that lecherie and pride
Been from al vertu set ful ferr a-side. 5880

Orpheus' life
was of mingled
joy and ad-
versity.

How Orpheus endured in his lyue
Ioie entirmedlid with aduersite;
In his youthe whan he dede wyue
He felte in wedlok ful gret felicite, 5884
His worldli blisse meynt with duplicite,
As Fortune hir chaungis gan deuyde,
Which from al vertu be set ful ferr a-side.

Marpessa made
war wantonly
and came to a
sudden end.

Marpesia, for hir list to stryue 5888
With wilful werris tencrecen hir contre,
But hir pompe was ouerturned blyue,
Whan in bataile vnwarli slayn was she:
For off al werre deth is the fyn parde, 5892
So furious Mars can for his folk prouide,
Which from al vertu is set ful ferr a-side.

Princes, flee
pride and lust,
and do not be
guided by
avarice. Such
things are set
far aside
from virtue.

Ye myhti Pryncis, lat wit and resoun dryue
Your hih noblesse to considre and see 5896
How Fortune estatys can depryue
And plunge hem down from ther prosperite.
Pride and luxure, I counsaile, that ye fle,
Fals auarice ne lat nat be your guide, 5900
Which from al vertu is set ful ferr a-side.

[Off Priamus kyng of Troye, and how the monke of
Bury translatur of this book wroot a boke of
the siege of Troye callid Troye book.] ¹

After this,
Bochas began
to think of
Priam,

AFFTIR these compleyntis & lamentaciouns,
Which [that] Bochas dede in his book compile,
Medlid among with transformaciouns 5904
Set in Ouide be ful souereyn stile,
Whan he on hem hadde musid a long while,
Seyn the* maner bothe off ther sorwe & ioie,
He gan remembre on Priamus off Troie. 5908

5889. hir] his H.

5894. vertues R.

5895. *This stanza is omitted in R.* 5899. luxurye H.

5904. transmutaciouns R.

5907. the] ther B — of ther] the R, H.

5908. to remembre R — on] of R, H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 31 recto.

- First off his berthe and off his kenreede, [p. 73] who was a
 How among kynges he was most famous; descendant of
 And as poetis recorde off hym in deede, Dardanus
 He descendid of worthi Dardanus, and Jupiter
 Which, as his lyne declareth onto vs, through his
 From Iubiter was lyneali come doun father
 Onto his fader callid kyng Lamedoun. Laomedon.
- 5912
- Off olde Troie this Lamedoun was kyng; 5916
 Destroied bi Grekis he and his contre.
 Afftir whom, [this] Priamus regnyng,
 Made there ageyn a myhti strong cite,
 Where he ful longe in ful gret rialte, 5920
 With wiff and childre, most worthi of renoun,
 With sceptre & crowne heeld possessioun.
- Gouerned his cite in pes and rihtwisnesse,
 And Fortune was to hym fauourable; 5924 He ruled in
 For off al Asie the tresour and richesse peace and
 He dede assemble, this kyng most honourable. righteousnesse
 And in armys he was so comendable,
 That thoruh the world as ferr as men may gon, 5928
 Off hih noblesse the renoun off hym shon.
- This Priamus hadde childre many on,
 Worthi pryncis, & off ful gret myht; 5932 and had many
 But Ector was among hem euerichon children, of
 Callid off prowesse the lanterne & the lyht; whom Hector
 For ther was neuer born a bettir knyht. and Troilus
 Troilus in knyhtod so manli eek was founde, were the best
 That he was named Ector the secounde. knights.
- 5936
- But yiff I shulde reherse the manheede
 Off kyng Priam & off his sonys all,
 And how his cite besieged* was in deede,
 And al the story to remembraunce call, 5940
 Tween hym & Grekis how it is befall,
 The circumstaunces rehersyng vp & doun,
 To sette in ordre the firste occasioun
- Off the siege, whi it was first laid
 Bi Hercules and also bi Iason, —
 The maner hool in Troie Book is said, 5944 for I have
 already told it
 as well as I
 could in the
 Troy Book,

5912. Dardanus] Dacianus R, Darnamus J, H 5.

5918. this] om. H, R 3.

5921. wiff] his wiff R.

5922. heeld] heeld the R.

5924. hym] om. R. 5925. all of R. 5933. & the] of R.

5935. eek] om. R. 5939. besegied B. 5941. Betwene R.

Reudli endited off my translacioun,
 Folwyng vpon the destruccioun
 Callid the seconde, which, bi acountis cleer,
 Fulli endured the space off ten year,— 5948

For, as me semeth, the labour were in veyn.
 Treuli also I not to what entent, 5952

which I translated

That I shold[e] write it newe ageyn;
 For I hadde onys in comaundement,
 Bi hym that was most noble & excellent
 Off kynges all[e], for to vndirtake 5956
 It to translate and write it for his sake.

for King Henry
 the Fifth, who
 was a very
 great man,

And yiff ye list to wetyn whom I meene,
 Henry the Fiffte, most myhti off puissaunce,
 Gaff me the charge off entent most cleene, 5960
 Thyng off old tyme to putte in remembraunce,
 The same Henry, for knyhtli suffisaunce,
 Worthi for* manhod, reknyd kynges all,
 With nyne worthi for to haue a stall. 5964

chief defender
 of the church,
 an enemy of
 the Lollards,
 and diligent to
 bring

To hooli chirch he was chieff defensour;
 In alle such causes Cristes chosen knyht.
 To stroie Lollardis he sette al his labour,
 Loued alle vertues, and to sustene riht, 5968
 Thoruh his noblesse, his manhod & his myht,
 Was dilligent & dede his besi peyne
 To ha[ue] set pes atween[e] rewmys tweyne, —

peace to Eng-
 land and
 France.

I meene, in sooth, twen Ing[e]land & Fraunce, 5972
 His purpos was taue had a pes fynall,
 Souhte out menyys with many circumstaunce,
 As weel be trete as actis marciall,
 Theron iupartid goodis, liff and all. 5976

Alas, he died
 too soon!

But, o allas, ageyn deth is no boone!
 This lond may seyn he deied al to soone.

May God give
 his soul good
 rest with holy
 saints in
 heaven!

For a-mong kynges he wasoon the beste,
 So alle his deedis conueied were with grace. 5980
 I pray to God, so yiue his soule good reste,
 With hooli seyntis in heuene a duellyng-place.
 For heere with vs to litil was the space

5954. MS. J: "the monke of Bury," rubricated in margin, leaf 31 b.

5959, 62. Herry R, H.

5963. for] off B — reknyd] rekene R, J, reken H 5, P.

5967. stroie Lollardis] destrye heritykes R. 5975. be] om. R.

5976. liff goodis R. 5981. so] to R, R 3, om. H.

That he abood; off whom the remembraunce 5984
Shal neuer deie in Ingland nor in Fraunce.

This worthi kyng gaff to me in charge,
In Inglissh tunge make a translacioun
Out off Latyn, withynne a volum large, 5988
How longe the Grekis lay afor the toun,
And how that Paris first at Citheroun
In Venus temple sili dede his peyne
Ther to rauesshe the faire queen Heleyne. 5992

He bade me
translate the
whole story
from Latin
into English.
It tells how
Paris carried
off Helen and
married her,
how Menelaus
and Agamem-
non besieged
Troy,

In which[e] book the processe ye may see: [p. 74]
To hym how she was weddid in the toun,
And off the siege leid to the cite
Be Menelay and* kyng Agamenoun,* 5996
And many another ful worthi off renoun
On outhur party, which that in bataile
Fro day to day ech other dede assaile.

What sholde I telle, or wherto sholde I write 6000
The deth off Ector or off Achilles?
Or wherto sholde I now off newe* endite
How worthi Troilus was slayn among the pres? —
The eende off Paris or off Pallamydes, 6004
Or the slauhtre off manli Deiphebus,
Or how his brother, callid Helenus,

how Hector,
Achilles, Paris
and others
died,

Told afforn how it was gret folie
That Paris sholde wedde the queen Heleyne; 6008
And how Cassandra in hir prophecie
On this weddyng sore gan compleyne,
And for the constreynt off hir hertly peyne,
How she wex mad and ran aboute the toun 6012
Til she was caucht and shet up in prisoun.

how Cassandra
foretold the
evil that would
follow if Paris
wedded Helen,
and how
they shut her
up in prison
for her noise,
and how
Cressida for-
sook Troilus
for Diomedes.

Alle these materis ye may beholde in deede
Set bi and bi withynne Troie Book,
And how Cressaide loued Diomeede, 6016

5986. to] *om.* R.

5989. to fore R. 5992. rauesshe] reioissh R.

5995. to] vnto R.

5996. Menelay] Meneldy R, H 5, meneldi J — and] and be B
— Agamenoun] Lamedoun B, R, H, J, H 5, R 3.

5998. eithir R.

6002. now off newe] off newe now B, R — now] *om.* J.

6008. the] this R. 6010. this] the R — bi gan R.

6014. these materis] this mateer R, this matter P.

6016. how] *om.* R — Crisseide H.

Whan worthi Troilus she wilfulli forsook:
Off hir nature a quarel thus she took,
Tassaie bothe, yiff neede eek wer, to feyne
To take the thridde, & leue hem bothe tweyne. 6020

Nor will I tell
how the
Greeks finally
won the town,
and of their
misfortunes
in their home-
ward journey,
and of Ulysses
and Penelope.

I [wil] passe ouer and telle off hir no more;
Nor bi what menys Grekis wan the toun —
How Eneas, nor how that Anthenore
Ageyn kyng Priam conspired fals tresoun, 6024
Nor how Vlixes gat Palladioun —
The deth off Priam nor Heccuba the queene,
Nor how that Pirrus slouh yonge Polliceene.

You must read
the Troy Book.

Nor heer to write, it is nat myn entent, 6028
Repair off Grekis hom to ther contre,
Afftir the cite and Ylioun was brent,
Nor off ther myscheuys thei hadde in the se,
Nor how Vlixes fond Penelope 6032
A trewe wiff, thouth he were longe hir fro; —
Thoruhout al Grece I can reede off no mo.
Off these materes thus I make an eende:
What fell off Grekis afftir ther viage, 6036
To Troie Book the folk echon I sende,
Which haue desir to seen the surplusage,
How Grekis first maden ther passage,
Towardis Troie, besegyng the cite — 6040
Redith the story; — ye gete no mor off me.

¶ Bochas ageyn þe surquedous pride of hem that
trusten in her riches.¹

O ye proud
people who
trust in
strength, beauty,
nobility, wealth,
remember
Priam's fate!

YE proude folkis that sette* your affiaunce
In strengthe, beute or in hih noblesse,
Yff ye considre Fortunys variaunce, 6044
And coude a merour affor your eyen dresse

6019. eek wer] wer al so R, were also J, H 5.

6021. wil] *om.* R, R 3, P, H 5 — hir] it J.

6022. Nor] Neithir R, J.

6023. nor] neithir R, J, H 5, P — that] *om.* H, J, P, H 5.

6025, 26. Nor] Neithir R. 6026. of Heccuba R.

6029. to] in to R.

6031. Nor] Neithir R — myscheuys] myscheffe R, myschef J,
mischief P, myschiffe H 5 — hadden H.

6032. Nor] Neithir R.

6037. the folk echon] tho folke R. 6041. Redith] Rede R.

6042. sette] setten B. 6043. in beute R.

¹“Here spekith Bochas the Auctour of this book/ a-yenst the
surquedous pride of hem that trust/ in riches seying thise
wordys vnto hem.” MS. J. leaf 31 verso.

Off kyng Priam and off his gret richesse,
To seen how he and [how] his children all
From ther noblesse so sodenli be fall!

6048

Ector off knyghthod callid sours and well,
Sad and demur & famous off prudence,
Paris also in beute dede excell,
And Helenus in parfit prouidence;
Troilus in armys hadde gret experience,
Eek Deiphebus preued manli on his fon:
Yit in the werre thei wer slayn euerichon.

6052

Hector, Paris,
Deiphobus,
Helenus,—all
were slain.

Hadde nat this kyng, eek as I can deuise,
Noble Eccuba, which that was the queene,
A douhter callid Cassandra the wise,
Hir yonge suster faire Polliceene? —
Allas, alas! what may such pride meene!
For al-be-it ther renoun sprang ful ferre,
Yit were these women deuoured in the werre.

6056

Hecuba, Cas-
sandra, and
fair Polyxena,
— they too
were deuoured
in the war.

6060

Was he nat myhti & strong in all[e] thynges,
And hadde also off his alliaunce
Riht worthi princis, & many riche kynges,
And nyh al Asie vndir obeisaunce? —
Holde in his tyme most famous off puissaunce,
Most renommed off richesse and tresours,
Til that Fortune with hir sharp[e] shours,

6064

Was not
Priam mighty?
Had he not
worthy allies
and almost
all Asia under
his rule?

6068

Whan that he sat hiest on hir wheel,
This blynde goddessse gan hym to assaile.
Hir froward malice, he felte it ful weel:
His gold, his tresour first thei gan to faile,
And dirke gan his roial apparaile.
Be which exaample all proude men may see
The onseur trust, the mutabilite,

[p. 75]

When he sat
highest on her
wheel, Fortune
cast him down.

6072

Which in this world is seyn & found* alday.
Mid off estatys in ther magnyfience,
Ebbe afftir flowe maketh no delay,

6076

Each man must
take his turn
as it comes
about.

6047. 2nd how] *om.* R, J, H 5, P.

6054. Eek] Also R — on] *in* R.

6055. euerichon] *echone* H.

6056. eek] also R. 6059. faire] *yong* H.

6060. such] *al sich* R. 6063. Was] *What* R.

6066. vndir] *vndir* his R. 6071. began R.

6073. thei] *it* R. 6074. derken R.

6077. found] *founden* B. 6078. In myddis of statys R.

But halt hir cours; there is no resistance: 6080
 The tide abit nat for no violence;
 Ech man that standith off chaunges heer in doute
 Mut take his turn as it cometh a-boute.

Let Priam be a clear mirror to you, proud people, who put your trust in vain glory, that fades as a flower. Let Priam been to you a cleer merour, 6084
 Ye proude folkis, that sette your affiaunce
 In such veyn glorie,* which fadith as a flour,
 And hath off beute heer noon attendaunce.
 The world to you cast a ful bittir chaunce: 6088
 For whan ye wene* sitte hiest atte fulle,
 Than will she rathest your briht[e] fethres pulle.

You have had warnings enough of how worldly joy is mingled with dread. Ye han warnyngis for to taken heed 6092
 Bexaample off other, cleer & riht visible,
 How worldli blisse is medlid ay with dreed.
 And yiff your resouns and wittis be sensible,
 Thyng seyn at eye is nat incredible;
 And al this doctryn is to you in veyn, 6096
 Yiff in your tyme ye ha[ue] no chaunges seyn.

Bochas' advice is to leave your vices and have faith in Him who can best help in time of need. Werfore Bochas onto your auail
 Ful prudentli put you at this issu:
 First of all he yeueth you this counsail, 6100
 To leue your vices & take you to vertu,
 And sette your trust al hooli on Iesu;
 For he may best in myscheeff helpe, & neede,
 Off worldli chaunges that ye thar nat dreede. 6104

¶ The preis of Bochas & suerte that stondith in pouert.¹

When great lords and dignitaries sit highest on their thrones, the hour of their decline approaches. THESE grete lordshipes, these hih[e] dignites,
 Cheeff thyng annexid onto ther regalie,
 Whan thei sitten hiest in ther sees,
 And round aboute stant ther cheualrie, 6108
 Dreed entreth in, pereil and envie,
 And onwar chaung[e], which no man may knowe,
 The hour whan Fortune will make hem loute lowe.

6081. abyde R.

6086. gloire B. 6089. wenen B, R.

6094. wittis & resouns R. 6099. Ful] & H.

6104. chaunges] thynges H — dare not R.

6106, 8. ther] the R. 6111. loute] om. H.

¹ "Here also, Iohn Bochas put a grete preisyng and a commendacioun of suerte þat stondith in pouerte / vnder thise wordis in sentence." MS. J. leaf 32 recto.

Thei may weel holden a statli gret houshold,
 With a veyn trust ther power sholde ay laste,
 Clad in ther mantles off purpil, perle & gold,
 And on the wheel off Fortune clymbe up faste —
 Lich as she myhte neuer down hem caste;
 But ay the hieere ther clymbyng is att all,
 Allas, the sorere is ther onhappi fall.

6112 The more im-
 posing their
 household and
 the greater
 their state, the
 more unhappy
 their fall.

6116

The fal off Priam and kyng Agamenoun
 Ouhte off riht mor to be compleynynd,
 Whan Fortune hadde hem pullid down
 And off hir malice hath at hem disdeynynd,
 Than yiff thei neuer to worshepe hadde atteynynd;
 But ther fallyng was the more greuous
 Because thei wern toforn so glorious.

6120

It were better
 had Priam and
 Agamemnon
 never been
 kings.

6124

O thou Pouert, meek, humble and debonaire,
 Which that kepest the lawes off Nature,
 For sodeyn chaunges thou wilt nat disespaire,
 So art thou fraunchised fro Fortunys lure;
 Alle hir assautis thou lowli doost endure,
 That she may haue no iurediccioun
 To interupte thi possessioun.

6128

Poverty is free
 from the
 assaults of
 Fortuna.

6132

Thou settist litil bi al worldli richesse,
 Nor be his tresours which be transitorie;
 Thou scornest hem that ther sheltrouns dresse
 Toward batailles for conquest and victorie;
 Thou despisist al shynyng off veynglorie,
 Laude off tryumphe which conquerours ha[ue] souht,
 With all ther pillages, thou settist hem at nouht.

6136

He sets little
 store by wealth
 and scorns
 conquest, vain
 glory,

Thou dispreisist al superfluite;
 Non infortune may chaunge thi corage:
 And the shippis that saile bi the se
 With marchaundise among the floodis rage,
 Ther auentures and ther pereilous passage —
 Lyff, bodi, good, al put in aventure
 Onli for lucre, gret richesse to recure —

6140

and all super-
 fluity. He does
 not risk his life
 at sea for the
 sake of riches

6144

6114. mantell R — perle] perre H. 6118. ther] the R.
 6119. kyng] of R. 6122. hir] om. R.
 6125. to fore thei wer R. 6127. lawe H.
 6128. dispaire R. 6131. iurisdiccione R.
 6134. Nor] Neithir R. 6136. bataille R — and] or R.
 6137. dispisith R — off] or R.
 6138. tryumphe H — souht] wrouht H.
 6140. dispreisist] despisest H.
 6141. Non] nor noon H. 6144. 2nd ther] om. R.

or quarrel over money and rewards, which men win only to leave forever. Off al such thyng thou takest litil heede, [p. 76]
 Nor off that peeple that maneres do purchase, 6148
 Nor off plederis, which for lucre & meede
 Meyntene quarelis & questis doon enbrace,
 Thou hem beholdest with a ful stille face,
 Ther soutil werkynge souht out for the nonys, 6152
 And sodenli departe from al attonys.

His wealth is patience. Thou canst in litil also haue suffisaunce,
 And art content with ful smal dispenge;
 For thi richesse and thyn habundaunce 6156
 Withoute gruchchyng is humble pacience.
 Yiff any man do to the offence,
 Thou foryetist and lihtli canst foryieue;
 To the suffisith so [that] thou maist lyue. 6160

In summer the starry sky and the green leaves are his shelter. The sterred heuene is thi couerture
 In somer sesoun; vnder the leuys greene
 Thou makest thi duellyng & doost thiselff assure
 Ageyn gret heetis off the sunne sheene: 6164
 Content with frutis & watir cristal cleene
 To staunche thyn hunger & thi thrustis sore,
 Afftir the sesouns, & carest for no more.

and in winter he lies on straw without complaining, and sings merrily before thieves; for he can journey from land to land without fear. Pouert eek liggith the colde wyntis nyht 6168
 Wrappid in strauh, withoute compleynyng;
 Withoute dreed he go[eth] glad and liht,
 And tofor theuys he merili doth syng:
 He* goth also withoute paryschyng* 6172
 Fro lond to lond among[es] poore & riche;
 For freend and fo to hym be bothe aliche.

Seneca says that Glad Poverty is the richest of all things, content in joy and in adversity. Moral Senec recordeth be writyng,
 Richest off thynges is Glad Pouerte, 6176
 Euer off o cheer[e], void off al gruchchyng,
 Bothe in ioie and in aduersite:
 Thoruh al the world[e] last hir liberte,
 And hir fraunchise stant in so gret ese, 6180
 That off hir fredam no man will hir displese.

6148. Nor] Or R.

6149. Nor] Neithir R — pletours R, pleters H.

6159. canst] dost H.

6161. thi] the H. 6166. thi] thyne R. 6168. eek] also R.

6172. He] She B, J, H, H 5, R 3, P — paryschyng] patisyng
 B, patisyng J, H 5, patisshyng H, parisyng R 3, paryschyng R.

6174. hym] her P — be both to hym H — I-lyche R.

6179. lastith R. 6180. hir] his H.

She is norice off studie & off doctryne,
 In vertuous labour doth hir dilligence;
 And off sciences, which that be dyuine,
 She is callid mooder be clerkis, in sentence.
 Off philisophres most had in reuerence,
 Fortune and she so ferr assonder varie,
 That ech to other off custum is contrarie.

6184 nurse
 of study,
 mother of
 sciences.

Hir hertili ioie is for to lyue in pes,
 Hateth tumulte, noise and disturbaunce;
 For hir disciple, callid Zenocrates,
 In wilful pouert set hooli his plesaunce,
 Sobre off his port, thoruh whose attempt[e]raunce
 Ful many a man bexauple off his techyng
 Wer brouht to vertu fro vicious lyuyng.

6192 Poverty hates
 noise and
 tumult.
 Zenocrates was
 her disciple.

His diete was so mesurable
 And deuoid off superfluite,
 That his corage he kepte ferme & stable,
 Fro flessfli lustis he was so attempre:
 Resoun maistred his sensualite,
 Desirs onleefful for to sette a-side;
 Duryng his liff Pouert was his guide.

6196 Moderate in all
 things, guided
 only by reason,

His abidyng and conuersacioun
 Was in placis that were solitarie;
 Mong trees & wellis he bilt hym a donioun,
 With multitude he hated for to tarie:
 For Pouerte was his secretarie,
 Sobre off his cheer & stable off his entent,
 And in Athenes first to scoole he went.

6204 he loved soli-
 tary places and
 built him a
 retreat amidst
 trees and flow-
 ing water.

He was so myhti off auctorite,
 Rihtwisnesse & iustice to obserue,
 That rihtful iuges his sentence took at gre:
 He coude his mouth & tunge so weel preserue,
 That in the temple onys off Mynerue,
 Withoutyn oth, onto his sentence,
 To that he saide the iuges gaff credence.

6212 He was known
 to be so up-
 right, that
 judges accepted
 his word with-
 out oath.

6216

6182. 2nd off] *om.* R. 6184. that] *om.* H.

6185. is] *om.* R.

6190. disturbaunce] *perturbaunce* H. 6194. a] *om.* R.

6199. so attempted was he H.

6200. Pat Resoun H — manstried R. 6205. Amonge R.

6206. hated] *hate* hym R. 6209. to scole first R.

6213. so] *ful* R.

Asked why he
was taciturn,
he answered
that silence
had never done
him harm.

He axed was among gret audience,
Whi he was soleyne off his daliaunce:
His answer was, that neuer for silence
Thoruh litil spekyng he felte no greuaunce. 6220
Spech onavised causeth repentaunce;
And rakil tungen, for lak off refreynyng,
To many a man hath be ful gret hyndryng.

Diogenes also
was a true
heir of Poverty.
He lived in a
litte tun which
he turned about
against the
sun's rays.

Diogenes, trewe heir and next allied 6224
To wilful pouert be iust enheritaunce, —
For al richeshe he pleyntli hath diffied,
It was to hym so gret[e] encumbraunce
With worldli tresour to haue* alliaunce. 6228
His duellyng made withynne a litil tunne,
Which turned a-boute with concours off the sunne,

When king
Alexander
visited him,

Hymselff refresshyng with hete off Phebus
bemys; [p.77]
For he was content, God wot, with ful lite. 6232
Kyng Alisaundre, that conquered rewmys,
Cam ridyng down, & gan hymselff delite
This philisophre to seen and visite,
Hymselff sequestred sool from al the pres, 6236
And cam alone to seen Diogenes.

and offered
him great
treasure, he
said, "pray
don't take
from me that
which you
cannot give.

Proffred to* hym gret richeshe & tresour,
Bad hym aske what thyng that he wolde,
That myhte hym plese or doon to hym socour; 6240
But off al that, he nothyng ne tolde,
But praied hym ful lowli, that he sholde
Nat drawe from hym þat thyng, ageyn al riht,
Which for to yiue lay nat in his myht. 6244

"You have no
lordship over
the sun, and
your shadow
keeps his rays
from me."

"What thyng is that?" quod Alisaundre ageyn,
"I ha[ue] be conquest al ertheli tresour wonne."
The philisophre seide he spak in veyn,
"Thou hast," quod he, "no lordshap off the sonne. 6248
Thi shadwe lettith his bemys fro my tonne;

6224. next] *om.* R.

6227. To him it was J, P, H 5 — an encombraunce R.

6228. haue] hauen B.

6231. hete] the heete H — hete off Phebus bemys] with the sunne beemys R.

6235. to visite R. 6236. sequestred] requestrid R.

6238. to] vnto B, R, J, P, H 5. 6241. ne] no R.

6242. sholde] wolde H.

6248. off] on R. 6249. lettist R.

And sithe thou hast no power off his liht,
I pray the freendli, forbarre me nat his siht."

Thouh Alisaundre was myhti off puissaunce,
And al the world[e] hadde in his demeyne,
Yit was his resoun vnder thobeisaunce
Off flesshli lustis fetrid in a cheyne;
For in his persone will was souereyne,
His resoun bridled be sensualite,
Troublyng the fredam off riht & equite.

6252 Although Alexander was mighty, his reason was fettered by sensuality,

6256

For where that will hath dominacioun
In a prynce, which sholde sustene riht,
And parcial fauour oppressith his resoun,
And trouthes title is bor doun with myht,
And egall doom hath lost his cleer[e] lyht:
Thouh for a sesoun thei sitte in hih[e] chaires,
Ther fame shal fade withynne a fewe yeres.

6260 and where will has domination over truth, fame shall fade.

6264

In this mater mak a comparisoun
Twen Alisaundre and Diogenes:
The ton endured but a short sesoun,
For that he loued werre more than pes;
And for the tother was nat rech[e]lles,
But heeld hym content with giffis off Nature,
Onto gret age his pouert dede endure.

Alexander lasted but a short season

6268

Alisaundre was slay[e]n with poisoun,
In his triumphes whan he dede excell;
But in a tonne that lay ful lowe doun
Diogenes drank watir off the well.
And off ther eende the difference to tell,
Alisaundre with couetise was blent;
The philisophre with litil was content.

and died by poison. Diogenes lived to old age in his tun.

6276

Blessid be pouert, that may endure longe,
Maugre the fraude & daunger off Fortune,
Where-as kynges & emperour[e]s stronge
In ther estat no while may contune.
And off all vertues rekned in comune,
Tween indigence and gret habundaunce,
Is a good mene content with suffisaunce.

6280 Blessed be poverty, a mean between indigence and great wealth.

6284

6250. his] the R.

6251. his] my R. 6258. Troublede R.

6264. charis R.

6267. Bitwene R. 6272. a gret R.

6285. Bitwene R — gret] om. R.

There is no
assurance in
riches; lords do
not have every-
thing to please
them.

For with gret plente men be nat assurid,
Affir ther lust alway to lyue in ese; 6288
And thouh that men gret tresour han recurid,
With ther richesse thei feele many disese:
Lordis ha[ue] nat all thyng that may hem plese;
But hertili ioie, philisophres expresse, 6292
Is grettest tresour tween pouert & richesse.

Diogenes lived
longer than
Priam,

For this chapitle sheweth a figure,
A maner liknesse and demonstracioun,
How Diogenes lengere dede endure 6296
Than myhti Priam or kyng Lamedoun:
Texemplefie, in conclusioun,
Ther is mor trust in vertuous symplesse,
Than in presumyng off vicious fals richesse. 6300

and Paris' and
Helen's mis-
conduct
brought all
Troy to
destruction.

For thauoutrie off Paris and Heleyne
Brouhte al Troye to destruccioun;
Pride & luxure were also menys tweyne
Whi Grekis leide a siege to the toun, 6304
And fynal cause off ther confusioun,
To outhier parti losse off many a man,
The ground conceyued whi first the werre gan.

¶ Lenvoye.

Priam fell
from riches to
poverty, from
kingly honour
to wretched-
ness,

THIS tragedie pitous & lamentable 6308
And dolerous to writen & expresse,
That worthi Priam, of kynges most notable,
Was falle in pouert from* his gret richesse,
Fro kyngli honour into wrechidnesse, 6312
Fro sceptre & crowne, & from his regalie
To myschieff brouht thoruh fals auoutrie.

Hector was
slain,

Was nat Fortune froward and deceyuable [p. 78]
For to suffre bi her doubilnesse, 6316
And bi hir cours, which euer is variable,
That worthi Ector, flour off hih prowessse,
Sholde onwarli, most famous off noblesse,
Be slayn allas, cheeff stok off cheualrie, 6320
For a quarell off fals auoutrie?

6288. ther lust] lust of hem R.

6292. doth expresse R. 6293. bi twene R.

6301. thauoutrie] the Auarice R. 6304. to] to fore R.

6306. a] om. R. 6307. began R. 6309. &] or R.

6311. from] for B, for al H, J, H 5.

6312. kyngli] knyhtly R. 6316. suffre] suffre hir R.

Agamenoun coumptid incomparable
 Among Grekis for trouthe & rihtwisnesse,
 To gouerne most glorious and hable, —
 Withynne his paleis, the story berth witenesse,
 His wiff Clymestra thoruh hir cursidnesse
 Assentid was to moordre hym off envie,
 For thoccasioun off fals auoutrie.

6324

Agamemnon
 murdered, and
 all through
 adultery.

Ye noble pryncis, conceyueth how chaungable
 Is worldli honour thoruh onstedfastnesse!
 Seeth off kyng Pryam the glori was onstable;
 Fix in your mynde this mateer doth inpresse,
 And your corages knyhtli doth vp dresse,
 Ageyn all titles holdeth chaumpartie
 Which appertene to fals auoutrie.

6328

Princes, resist
 all things that
 appertain to
 adultery.

[Off mighty Sampson whiche tolde his counsaile
 to Dalida wherby he was deceived.]¹

WHO was mor myhti or strong than Samp-
 son?

6336

Samson un-
 armed slew a
 lion and made
 a riddle on his
 exploit:

Non mor delyuer, þe Bible berth witenesse:

Withoute wepne he slouh a fers leoun,

And for his enmyes to hym dede expresse

His vnkouth problem, anon he gan hym dresse 6340

Geyn Philistes, and slouh off hem thretti,

To paie his promys spoiled hem bi and bi.

His problem was, the text thus rehersyng,

Afftir the lettir in veray sothfastnesse:

6344

"Out of the
 eater came
 meat, sweet-
 ness out of the
 strong."

"Ther cam out mete off a thyng etyng,

And fro the stronge ther wente out suetnesse."

But his wiff, off froward doubilnesse,

Which euer wrouhte to his disauail,

6348

Off worthi Sampson tolde the counsail:

"What is mor strong than is a leoun,

Or mor soote than hony in tastyng?" —

But women haue* this condicioun,

6352

But his wife
 disclosed the
 answer,
 (women must
 die if they
 cannot tell
 secrets).

Off secre thynges whan thei haue knowlechyng,

Thei bollyn inward, ther hertis ay fretyng:

Outher thei musten deien or discure,

So brotil is off custum ther nature.

6356

6322. counted R. 6337. Non] Nor H — Bible] story H.

6341. Ayens R. 6352. haue] han B, R.

6354. boyllyng inwardis R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 33 recto.

It was, that
bees made
honey in the
head of the
dead lion.

This was the cas: the leoun that was ded,
Ageyn the sonne gapyng lay vpriht;
A swarm off been entred in his hed,
Off whom ther cam hony anon riht.
And whan Sampson theroff hadde a siht,
He fantasied in his opynyoun
Ful secreli this proposicioun,

6360

Samson's wife
wheeded it out
of him,

As ye han herd, and gan it foorth purpose,
That Philistes to hym it sholde expowne,
Vnder a payne the trouthe to hym onclose.
But with his wiff thei preueli gan rowne;
And she on Sampson gan compleyne & frowne,
And feynynгли so longe vpon hym weepe,
That he nat coude his counsail from hir keepe.

6364

6368

and then told
the Philistines.
A plague on
weeping wives
who cannot
hold their
tongues!

Which whan she kneuh, she made no tarieng,
But pleyn and hool she gan it to declare.
Such double trust is in ther wepyng;
To keepe ther tungen wommen can nat spare.
Such wepyng wyues, euel mut thei fare!
And all husbondis, I pray God yiue hem sorwe,
That to hem tell ther counseil eue or morwe.

6372

6376

"My calf told
you," said
Samson. Al-
though Samson
was very
strong, he was
rather afraid of
his wife.

She told hem hool, she tolde it hem nat halff;
And Sampson thanne gan vpon hem smyle,
"Yiff ye nat hadde herd it in my calff,
Ye sholde nat a founde it a gret while."

6380

Who may be seur, wher women list begile! —
Thouh bookis Sampson off strengthe so comende,
Yit durste he nat ageyn his wiff offende.

6384

He tied the
tails of foxes
to firebrands,
and set them
running in the
Philistines'
vineyards.

This myhti Sampson dede also his payne,
Thre hundred foxis onys that he fond,
He took her tailes, knet hem tweyne & tweyne,
And amynd euerich he sette a feer-brond;
And as thei ran in Philistes lond,
So furiousli vp and down thei wente,
That thei her frutis & ther vynes brente.

6388

He killed a
thousand men
with the jaw-
bone of an ass,

Eek be tresoun whan he was onys bounde
With newe cordis as he lay and sleep,
Ther cam thre thousand, which that Sampson founde,

6392

6363. secreli] sikirly R. 6368. on] in R.

6377. eue] euen R, even H — or] & H.

6380. ye] she R — it] om. R, H, P.

6389. ran] ronne H. 6391. frute H. 6392. Eek] Also R.

- Tamoordred hym, or that he took keep:
 He brak his bondis, and vp anon he leep, 6396
 Off an asse [he] cauhte a chaule-bon,
 And a thousand he slouh off hem anon.
 He gan to feynthe & hadde a sodeyn lust [p. 79] from which he
 For to drynke, fadid face and cheer; 6400 afterwards
 And God sente hym to staunche with his thrust drank clear
 From thassis toth watir cristal cleer, water.
 Which that sprang out large as a ryuer,
 Refresshid his sperit, which afforn gan dull, 6404
 Til that he hadde off watir drunke his full.
 Afftir he wente to Gazam the cite,
 Mong all his enmyes, that were off gret myht,
 To his plesaunce where he dede see 6408
 A ful fair woman, lay with hire al nyht,
 And on the morwe, longe or it was lyht,
 Maugre the wach, vpon his shuldres squar
 The gatis stronge vp to an hill he bar. 6412
 And in a vale* which callid was Soret
 Ful hote he loued Dalida the faire, Delilah lived in
 On whom his herte was ful sore set, the vale of
 She koude hir feyne so meek & debonaire, 6416 Sorek.
 Make hym such cheer whan that hym list repaire.
 But I dar calle hir Dalida the double,
 Cheeff roote & cause off al his mortal trouble.
 He neuer drank wyne whiht nor red, 6420 Samson never
 Off Nazarees such is the goueraunce; drank wine or
 Rasour nor sheer touchid neuer his hed, cut his hair.
 For in long growyng stondeth ther plesaunce.
 And this Sampson, most myhti off substaunce, 6424
 Hadde al his force be influence off heuene,
 B[y] heris wexyng, that were in noumbre seuene.
 It was ful secre in euery manys siht,
 Among peeppe told for an vnkouth thyng, 6428
 Wheroff Sampson hadde so gret myht,
 Outward shewed bi force off his werkyng.
 But Dalida with hir flateryng

But Delilah
found out his
secret of his
strength.

6395. To amoordre R. 6399. began R. 6403. that] om. R.
 6405. Gazon R. 6407. Amonge R. 6408. that he R.
 6409. ful] om. H. 6410. or] er H. 6411. wach] wachis R.
 6412. vp to] vpon H. 6413. vale] valei B — was] is R.
 6415. On] In R. 6421. such] which R.
 6424. substaunce] puyssaunce H. 6427. ful] om. R.
 6430. werkyng] wrytyng R.

- Wolde neuer stynte, enqueryng euer among, 6432
 Til that she kneuh wherbi he was so strong.
- Although fair
 of face, she
 was like a
 snake hiding
 under flowers. She lich a serpent daryng vnder floures,
 Or lik a werm that wrotith on a tre,
 Or lich an addere off manyfold colourés, 6436
 Riht fressh apperyng and fair vpon to see:
 For shrowdid was hir mutabilite
 With wolliheed[e] and a fair pretense
 Off trewe menyng vnder fals apparence. 6440
- He was honest
 and faithful;
 she was other-
 wise, and wore
 many colours, He mente trouthe, & she was variable,
 He was feithful, and she was ontrewé,
 He was stedfast, and she was onstable,
 His trust ay oon; she loued thynges newe: 6444
 She wered colourés off many dyuers hewe,
 In stede off bleu, which stedfast is and cleene;
 She loued chaunges off many dyuers greene.
- and shaved off
 his hair. But to the purpos for to condescende, 6448
 Whan she off Sampson kneuh al the preuite,
 Hir falsheed shortli for to comprehende,
 She made hym slepe ful sofftli on hir kne;
 And a sharp rasour afftir that took she, 6452
 Shoof off his her, large and off gret lengthe,
 Wherbi, allas, he loste al his strengthe.
- Nothing is
 worse than a
 secret enemy,
 especially if it
 be one's own
 wife. Damage is erthe is non so greuous,
 As an enmy which that is secrete, 6456
 Nor pestilence non so pereilous
 As falsnesse where he is preue,
 And speciali in femynyte;
 For yiff wyues be founden variable, 6460
 Wher shal husbondis fynden other stable?
- The Philistines
 put out Sam-
 son's eyes and
 compelled him
 to grind their
 corn. Thus Sampson was be Dalida deceyued,
 She coude so weel flatre, forge and feyne, —
 Which Philistes, whan thei ha[ue] conceyued, 6464
 Onwarli bond hym in a myhti cheyne,
 Cast hym in prisoun, put out his eyen tweyne,
 And off despiht, afftir, as I fynde,
 At ther queernys maad hym for to grynde. 6468
6436. eddre R.
 6438. shrowdid] froward R.
 6454. his] his gret R. 6457. Nor] Ne R. 6458. he] it R.
 6464. whan] whan bat H.
 6467. off despiht afftir] aftir of despite wryten R.
 6468. ther] the R — maad] thei made R.

Thei made a feste statli and solempne,
 Whan thei hadde al this tresoun wrouht;
 And to rebuke hym, scorne hym & condempne,
 Blynde Sampson was afor hem brouht:
 Which thyng ful sore greued hym in his thouht,
 Caste he wolde in his preue mynde
 Tauenge his blyndnesse sum maner weie fynde.

6472

Afterwards
 they made
 mock of
 him at a
 festival in
 their temple,

And whan he hadde thus bethouht hym longe,
 He made a child hym preueli to leede
 To tweyne postis, large, squar and stronge,
 Embraced hem, or any man took heede,
 And gan to shake hem, withoute feer or dreede,
 So sturdili among his fomen all,
 That the temple is vpon hem fall.

6476

but he upset
 the pillars and
 brought the
 temple down
 on their heads.

Thus he was auengid on his foon,
 Which that falsli dede ageyn hym stryue,
 Slouh in his deieng, God wot, many on
 Mo than he dede euer afforn his lyue.
 And he was also, the date to descryue,
 In Israel, the Bible is myn auctour,
 Twenti yeer ther iuge and gouernour.

[p. 80]

6484

Thus dying he
 slew more men
 than he ever
 did before in
 his life.

6488

[Lenvoy.]

THIS tragedie yeueth in euidence
 To whom men shal ther counseil out discur;e;
 For rakell tungen, for lak off prouidence,
 Ha[ue] do gret harm to many a creature:
 Whan harm is doon, ful hard is to recure.
 Beth war be Sampson, your counsail weel to keepe,
 Thouh Dalida compleyne, crie and weepe.
 Whilom Sampson, for manhod & prudence,
 Hadde Israel in gouernaunce and cure,
 Daunted leouns thoruh his magnyficence,
 Made on a thousand a disconfiture;
 But his moste perelous auenture,
 Was whan he lay with Dalida to slepe,
 Which falsli coude compleyne, crie and weepe.
 Ye noble Pryncis, conceyueth the sentence
 Off this story, remembrid in scripture,
 How that Sampson off wilful negligence

6492

This tragedy
 shews that men
 ought not to
 tell their
 secrets.

6496

Beware of
 Delilahs.

6500

6504

Princes, keep
 your secrets;
 let Delilah
 complain and
 weep if she
 must.

6476. Whan] *om.* H. 6477. to] *om.* R. 6480. bi gan R.

6485. ful many R. 6486. euer he did R.

6490. in] an R. 6497. Whilom] *Sumtyme* R.

Was shaue & shorn, diffacid his figure;
 Keep your conceitis vnder couerture, 6508
 Suffre no nyhtwerm withynne your counsail kreepe,
 Thouh Dalida compleyne, crie and weepe!

A chapitle of Bochas discryuyng þe malis of wom-
 men.¹

My author
 Bochas was
 pleased to de-
 scribe the
 malice of
 women, and I
 don't know
 whether it was
 commendable
 of him or not.

MYN auctour Bochas reioished in his lyue,
 (I dar nat seyn, wher it was comendable) 6512
 Off these women the malice to descryue
 Generali, and writ — it is no fable —
 Off ther nature how thei be variable,
 And how ther malice best be euidence 6516
 Is knowe to hem that haue experience.

He said that
 they always
 try to keep
 men in subjec-
 tion and seek
 to replace by
 art what nature
 has denied
 them.

Thei can afforce hem, alday men may see,
 Be synguler fredam and dominacioun
 Ouer men to ha[ue]n souereynte, 6520
 And keepe hem lowe vnder subieccioun.
 Ful* sore laboure in ther opynyoun,
 Bi sotil crafft that thyng to recure,
 Which is to hem denyed off Nature. 6524

They massage
 their yellow,
 wrinkled faces

Bochas affermeth, & halt it for no tale,
 Yiff thei wante fressshnesse off colour,
 And han ther face iawne, swart & pale,
 Anon thei doon ther dilligent labour 6528
 In such a neede to helpe and do socour,
 Ther reuelid skyn abrod to drawe & streyne,
 Froward frounces to make hem smothe & pleyne.

and apply oint-
 ments to make
 their cheeks look
 red, although
 there is no rose.

Yiff no rednesse in ther chekis be,
 Nor no lelies delectable and white, 6532
 Than thei take, tencrece ther beute,
 Such oynementis as may most delite;
 Wher Kynde faileth the surplusage tacquite, 6536
 Thei can be crafft so for hemsilff dispose,
 Shewe rednesse thouh ther be no rose.

They use hot
 spices and roots
 to clear their
 complexions, and
 if their bosoms
 are too flat or
 too full,

And for to shewe ther face cleer and briht,
 With hooite spices and oynementis soote 6540
 Thei can be crafft countirfete a-riht,

6510. Thouh that R. 6516. best] kest R.
 6522. Ful] And B, J, H 5. 6527. face] faces R, H, P, R 3.
 6529. do] to R. 6533. delytable R.

¹ vommen B — Same heading in J, leaf 34 b.

Take in such cas many an holsum roote:

Wher Kynde faileth, cunnyng can do boote, —

Yiff ther brestis vp to hie hem dresse, 6544

Thei can ful weel thenbosyng doun represe.

And yiff thei been to soffte or to tendre,

Thei ha[ue] cunnyng to make hem hard & rounde.

Ther corsifnesse thei can eek make sclendre 6548

With poynant sauis that been in phesik founde;

Ther sotil wittis in sleihtis so habounde,

Thyng that is courbid or wrong in mennys siht

To make it seeme as it wente vpriht. 6552

Thei han strictories to make ther skyn to shyne,

Wrouht subtili off gomes & off glaire;

Crafftis lies to die ther her citryne,

Distillid watres, to make hem seeme faire, 6556

Fumygaciouns to rectefie the aiere,

Stomachers and fressh confecciouns

To represe fals exallaciouns.

Off alle these thynges Bochas hath most

despiht,

[p. 81] 6560

Whan these vekkes, ferre Ironne in age,

Withynne hemsilff han veynglori and deliht

For to farce and poppe ther visage,

Lich a[s] peyntour[s] on an old ymage 6564

Leyn ther* coloures, riche and fressh off hewe,

Wermfrete stokkes to make hem seeme newe.

Ther slak[ke] skyn be craft abrod is streynynd,

Lik an orange fro the galei brouht;

Riche relikes aboute ther neckkis* cheynynd, 6568

Gold vpon gold, with perle & stonys wrouht.

And that ther colour outward appeire nouht

With wynd or sonne, which sholde hem steyne or
fade, 6572

For onkynde heetis thei vse citrynade.

they fashion
them to their
liking. They
reduce their
flesh by
swallowing
strong drugs,
and whatever
is crooked
they cause to
appear
straight.

They use glair
to make their
skin shine,
alkalies to
bleach their
hair, fumiga-
tions for dis-
agreeable
exhalations.

Bochas is most
scornful when
these old veks
paint and pop
their faces, like
craftsmen lay-
ing colours on
worm eaten
wood.

They stretch
their loose skin
till it resembles
an orange,
hang their
necks with
gold and gems,
use citrinade
when their
faces are
flushed,

6543. can] may R.

6546. And] om. R — been] om. R.

6548. corsiousnesse R — eek] also R.

6549. punyaunt sawis R.

6550, 51 are transposed in R. 6553. 2nd to] om. R.

6555. die] diht R. 6556. watir R.

6564. as peyntours] a peyntour R, J, H 5.

6565. Leyn ther] Leith his B, R, J, H 5, They lein P, Thei
lay R 3.

6569. nekkis] necke is B, nekke is J, H 5, necke is P.

6570. perlys R.

6571. appeire] appereth R.

and are always
wanting new
devices to
make them-
selves look like
Venus.

What sholde I write al ther vnkouth desires,
Sumtyme froward, sumtyme debonaire;
Ymagynyng sundry fressh attires,
Contreued off newe many thousand paire;
Dyuers deuyses to make hem seeme faire
In ther apport, be countirfet liknesse
For to rassemble Venus the goddessse.

6576

6580

They must
have a new
gown every day,
and their hearts
bleed if one is
better dressed
than another.
Each considers
herself fairest
as she pries in
her mirror.

Off on deuys thei holde hem nat appaied,
Thei mut ech day han a straunge weede;
Yiff any be than othir bet* arraied,
Off froward gruchchyng thei feele ther herte
bleede:

6584

For euerich thynkith veraili in deede,
Amorwe prieng withynne a merour briht,
For to be fairest in hir owen siht.

They either
make eyes at
men or pretend
shyness, and
always get
what they want.

Thei can ther eyen and ther lookis dresse
To drawe folk be sleihtis to ther lure;
And sumwhile bi ther frowardnesse
And feyned daunger, thei can off men recure
What-euer thei list, such is ther auenture.
Ageyn whos sleihtis force nor prudence
May nat auaile to make resistance.

6588

6592

Tears, flattery
and feigned ill-
ness bring many
a man in their
snare.

With constreynt wepyng & forgid flaterie,
Subtil spech[e]l farcid with plesaunce,
And many fals dissemelid maladie —
Thouh in ther hertis thei feele no greuaunce —
And with ther couert sobre daliaunce,
Thouh vndirnethe the double serpent dare,
Ful many a man thei ha[ue] brouht in ther snare.

6596

6600

Their sweetness
is full of mor-
tality, their
privilege is to
daunt and op-
press whatever
they choose.

O suet[e]nesse ful off mortalite!
Serpentyne with a plesaunt visage!
Onstable ioie ful off aduersite;
O most chaungable off herte & off corage!
In thi desirs hauyng this auauntage,
What-euer thou list to daunten and oppresse, —
Such is thi fraunchise, Bochas berth witnesse.

6604

6608

6577. many a R. 6580. to Venus R.

6583. bet than othir B, R, J.

6589. folkis R.

6590. sumtyme R. 6593. nor] ne R.

6594. to] forto R. 6597. many a R.

Off nature thei can in many wise
 Off myhti geauntis the power weel aslake:
 What wit off man can compass* or deuise,
 Ther sleihti wilis dar it vndertake,
 And, yiff hem list, theroff an eende make.
 Fro this conceit, who-so that discorde,
 A thousand stories the reuers can recorde.*

6612 To all that
 the wit of man
 can devise they
 are ready to
 apply their
 wiles.

Remembre first, how Hercules most strong
 Was brouht be women to his destruccioun;
 The queen Clymestra dede also gret wrong
 To moordre hir lord kyng Agamenoun.
 Dalida betraished also Sampson;
 Amphiorax sanc doun deepe into hell,
 Because his wiff his counsail dede out tell.

6616 Remember
 how Hercules,
 Agamemnon,
 Samson, and
 many more
 men were
 brought to
 destruction
 by women.
 6620

It nedith nat to make menciou, n,
 Thouh Phillis deide thoruh impacience
 Off longe abidyng off hir Demephoun,
 Nor how that Nisus, kyng off Magarence,
 Was bi his douhtres cursid violence
 Onwarli moordred, in Ouide it is told,
 Whan from his hed she stal the her off gold.

6624 Nor is the
 scale turned
 by Phyllis's
 constancy;
 think of
 Scylla, who
 murdered
 her father,
 6628

Bochas rehersith off wyues many on,
 Which in ther werkyng wer ful contrarious;
 But among all, he writith ther was on,
 Queen off Assirie and wiff to kyng Nynus,
 And be discent douhter to Neptunus,
 Semiramis callid in hir daies,
 Which off all men wolde make assaies.

6632 and
 Semiramis,
 Ninus's
 scandalous
 wife.

She nouthur spared straunger nor kynreede;
 Hir owne sone was nat set a-side,
 But with hym hadde knowlechyng in deede,
 Off which the sclaunder wente abrod ful wide.
 For with on man she koud nat a-bide,
 Such a fals lust was vpon hir fall,
 In hir corage to haue a-do with all.

6640 who had to do
 with all men,
 even with her
 own son.

6610. the] ther R. 6611. compassen B.
 6613. an ende ther of make R. 6615. recorde] accorde B, J.
 6616. first] om. R. 6618. Chymestra R.
 6621. deepe] om H—depe doun to R. 6624. Impacience H.
 6625. Off] For R. 6626. Nor] Nethir R—Margarence R.
 6630. rehersith] writith H. 6636. make] take R.
 6637. nor] no R. 6641. koude] myht H.
 4642. vpon] on R.

But it wearies
me to rehearse
these things.
It is not right
to condemn all
women because
one or two
were at fault.

And treu[eli] it doth my witt appall [p. 82] 6644
Off this mateer to make rehersaile;
It is no resoun tatwiten women all,
Thouh on or too whilom dede faile.
It sittith nat, nor it may nat auaile, 6648
Hem to rebuke that parfit been & goode,
Ferr out off ioynt thouh sum other stooode.

Rubies and
sapphires are
not the less
beautiful be-
cause there are
counterfeits,

The riche rube nor the saphir ynde
Be nat appeired off ther fressh beute, 6652
Thouh among stonys men countirfetis fynde;
And semblabli, thouh summe women be
Nat weel gouerned afftir ther degre,
It nat diffaceth nor doth no violence 6656
To hem that neuer dede in ther liff offence.

nor are lilies
and roses the
less sweet
though briars
and crooked
sticks grow
among them.

The white lelie nor the holsum rose,
Nor violettis spred on bankis thikke,
Ther suet[e]nesse, which outward thei onclose, 6660
Is nat appeired with no weedis wikke;
And thouh that breris, and many crokid stykke
Grove in gardyns among the floures faire,
Thei may the vertu off herbis nat appaire. 6664

We should
prize virtuous
women the
more because
there are also
vicious ones.

And I dar seyn, that women vertuous
Been in the[r] vertu off price mor comendable,
That ther be summe reknyd vicious,
And off ther lyuyng founde also onstable. 6668
Goode women auhte nat be partable
Off ther trespas nor ther wikked deede,
But mor comendid for ther womanheede.

What was
Scylla to Esther
or Clytemnestra
to Alceste?

What is appeired off Hester the meeknesse, 6672
Thouh that Scilla was sturdi & vengable?
Nor off Alceste the parfit stedfastnesse
Is nat eclipsed, but mor acceptable,
Thouh Clymestra was founde variable; — 6676
Lik as whan cloudis ther blaknesse doun declayne,
Phebus mor cleer doth with his bemys shyne.

6646. tatwiten] to edwiten R — women] *om.* R.

6653. among] ageyn H.

6660. ou ward thei] thei vnward R, thei outward H.

6661. Is] It is R. 6662. many a R.

6666. Been] Seen R.

6670. nor] ne of R. 6674. Alciste R.

6676. Thouh] Thowh that R — Clytemestra H, Clitemnestra P.

6678. with his beemys doth R.

- Ful many on ha[ue] cleene been al ther lyue,
 Ondefouled kept ther virgynyte; 6680
 And summe coude ageyn alle vices stryue
 Hem to conserue in parfit chastite,
 Deuoid off chaung and mutabilite:
 Thouh sum other ha[ue] therageyn trespacid, 6684
 The laude off hem is therwith nat diffacid.
 And who that euer off malice list accuse
 These celi women touchyng variaunce,
 Lat hem remembre, and in ther wittis muse, 6688
 Men be nat ay stable in ther constaunce.
 In this world heer is no perseueraunce;
 Chaung is ay founde in men & women bothe,
 On outhter parti, be thei neuer so wrothe. 6692
 No man sholde the vertuous atwite
 In stede off hym that dede the trespac; 6696
 Nor for a theeff a trewe man endite,
 Nor for the gilty an innocent manace.
 Goode and wikked abide in eueri place;
 Ther price, ther lak, lat hem be reseruyd
 To outhter parti as thei han disseruyd.
 Thouh Iohn Bochas in his opynyoun 6700
 Ageyn[es] women list a processe make,
 Thei that be goode off condicioun
 Sholde ageyn hym no maner quarel take,
 But lihtli passe, and ther sleuys shake; 6704
 For ageyn goode myn auctour* nothyng made,
 Who can conceyue theeffect off this balade.

Many have
lived all their
lives in
chastity: what
if others have
trespassed?

And let the
accusers of
these poor
women
remember
that men
are no better.

One does not
indict an
honest man
for a thief.

and although
John Bochas
abused bad
women, those
who are good
may shake
their sleeves
and pass
lightly on.

¶ Thexcus of Bochas for his vriting ageyn mys-
 govern[ed] vommen in stede of lenvoye.¹

YE women all, that shal beholde & see
 This chapitle and the processe reede, — 6708
 Ye that be goode founde in your degre,
 And vertuous bothe in thouht and deede,
 What Bochas sei[eth], tak[e] ye noon heede;

Good women
should pay no
attention to
what Bochas
says. He
rebuked bad
ones only,
and so

6679. cleene] cleer H. 6683. and] & of R. 6688. in] om. R.
 6691. in] on H. 6698. lat hem be] lete be R.
 6705. myn auctour] he B, H, J, R, P, H 5.
 6708. the] this R. 6709. founde] stonde R.
 6710. bothe] beeth R — in dede R. 6711. ye] ther of R.

¹ The same heading in J. "This balad declareth that no goode
 woman ouhte off riht to take A quarell ayens Iohn Bochas bowh
 he write a processe ayens hem þat he mys gouerned." MS. R.
 leaf 41 recto.

For his writyng, yiff it be discernyd, 6712
Is nat ageyn hem that be weel gouernyd.

this chapter
does not con-
cern well-be-
haved women
at all.

For thouh it fall that oon, or too, or three
Ha[ue] doon amysse, as therfore God forbeede
That other women which stable & feithful be 6716
Sholde be atwited off ther ongoodliheede,
But mor comendid for ther womanheede:
For this scripture, yiff it be concernyd,
Is ageyn hem that be nat weel gouernyd. 6720

A galled jade
winces at a
touch, but good
women have no
need to be
sensitive.

A gallid hors, the* sooth yff ye list see, [p. 83]
Who touchith hym, boweth his bak for dreede;
And who is knowe ontrewre in his cuntre,
Shrynkith his hornis whan men speke of falsheede. 6724
But goode women ha[ue] ful litil neede
To gruchch or frowne whan the trouthe is lernyd,
T[h]ouh ther be summe which be nat weel gouernyd.

It is the bad
ones who are
scolded.

Off Dalida and queen Pasiphe, 6728
Thouh doubilnesse dede ther bridil leede,
Yit off Lucrece and Penelope
The noble fame abroad doth shyne and spreede:
Out off good corn men may sum darnel weede, 6732
Women rebuke, in ther diffautis wernyd,*
And nat touche hem that be weel gouernyd.

[Off mighti pirrus that slouh pollicene which for his
pride and auoutrye deied in pouerte/ slayn atte
last bi Horestes.]¹

Among a com-
pany of weep-
ing princes,

BOCHAS musyng in his remembraunce, 6736
And considred in his fantasie
The onseur trust off worldli variaunce,
Off men & women the chaung and the folie,
The same tyme he sauh a cumpanye

6713. ayens R. 6716. which] which þat R — feithfull & stable H.

6720. ayens R.

6721. the] this veray B — the sooth yff ye list see] this verrey soth in deede H, þis is verray sothe in R.

6724. his] om. R. 6727. which] þat H. 6728. and] & of R.

6733. rebuke] rebukid H, rebuked R 3 — in] of H — diffautis] defeaute R — wernyd] quernyd B, J, quernyde R, wernyd H.

6737. off] & R.

¹MS. J. leaf 35 recto.

Off myhti pryncis, ful pitousli wepyng,
To, hym appeere ther fortune compleynyng.

6740

Among other that put hemsilff in pres,
Off myhti Pirrus first he hadde a siht,
That was the sone off worthi Achilles,
Among Grekis the moste famous knyht,
Most comendid off manhod & off myht,
Sone and next heir, [as] bookis specēfie,
Off Pelleus kyng off Thesalie.

6744

Pyrrhus, son
of Achilles,
appeared to
Bochas.

This Achilles, ful manli off his herte,
Hurt off Ector, and his wounde greene,
Slouh Ector afftir or he dede aduerte.
The which Achilles, for loue off Polliceene,
Bi compassyng off Eccuba the queene,
Vnder trete this Grekis champeoun
Was slayn off Paris withynne Troie toun.

6748

Achilles slew
Hector, and
Paris Achilles,
when he came
to Troy for
love of Polyx-
ena, whom
Pyrrhus after-
wards dismem-
bered

Whos deth tauenge Pirrus in his teene,
Furiousli, with face ded and pale,
Slouh afftirward the said[e] Polliceene,
And dismembrid al on pecis smale,
Which for to heere is a pitous tale,
That a knyht so vengable was in deede
To slen a maide, quakyng in hir dreede.

6756

6760

He koude for ire on hir no merci haue;
But with his suerd, most furious & wood,
Merciles vpon his fadres graue,
Lik a tirant he shadde hir chast[e] blood.
The deede horrible diffacid his knyhtod,
That to this day the sclaunder & the diffame
Be newe report reboundeth on his name.

6764

on his father's
grave, a hor-
rible deed.

6768

Poetis seyn, and speciali Ouide
Writ, whan Grekis fro Troie sholde saile,
How ther shippis ban anker* dede ride,
Off ther purpos which longe made hem faile.
But in this while, he maketh rehersaile,
Out off therthe, manacyng off cheere,
Off Achilles an ymage dede appeere.

6772

6776

Poets say that
Achilles ap-
peared to the
Greeks before
they sailed
from Troy,

6741. appeere] appered R. 6742. in] om. R.

6747. as] om. H. 6759. al] hir R.

6763. for ire] om. R. 6767. The] bat H.

6768. diffame] fame R.

6772. ban anker] bananker B, an hankre R, bi an anker J,
P, H 5.

demanding
that they make
a sacrifice of
Polyxena to
atone for his
murder.

To Grekis saide with a dedli face,
"I feele weel myn honour & my glorie,*
And my noblesse ful lihtli foorth dooth pace,
Onkynde peeple, out of your memorie, 6780
Which bi me hadde your conquest & victorie.
Your deuer doth Polliceene to take,
And on my graue a sacrefise to make.

How she died
is told in Ovid.

With hir blood looke ye spare nouht 6784
To sprynge it round aboute my sepulture;
Thus blood for blood with vengauunce shal be bouht,
And for my deth, the deth she mut endure."
And hool the maner off this auenture, 6788
And how she deied in hir maydenheed,
Methamorphoseos, the processe ye may reed.

Pyrrhus was
always blood-
thirsty; he slew
Priam and
carried off
Andromache.

In hasti vengauunce set was al his ioie,
With thrust onstaunchid Troian blood to sheede; 6792
He slouh Priam, the worthi kyng off Troie,
And into Grece with hym he dede leede
Andromecha* — the story ye may reede —
Weddid hir, and afftir in certeyne 6796
Be hym she hadde worthi sonys tweyne.

He also became
a pirate, for-
sook Androm-
ache and took
Hermione.

But in repairyng hom to his cuntre,
As Eolus dede his shippis dryue,
I fynde he was a pirat off the se; 6800
And into Grece whan he dede aryue,
Fortune onwarli gan ageyn hym stryue:
Forsook his wiff, leet hir lyue alone,
Took a-nother callid Hermyone. 6804

Orestes' wife,
by force. The
reward of
adultery is
always sudden
death or mis-
fortune.

Which was that tyme ioyned in mariage [p. 84]
To Horestes, sone off Agamenoun;
And he, alas, off wilful louys rage,
Took hir be force to his possessioun. 6808
But off auoutrie folwith this guerdoun,
Sodeyn deth, pouerte or shame,
Open disclaundre, gret myscheeff or diffame.

6778, 80, 81. gloire, memoire, victoire B.

6779. dooth] do H.

6781. your conquest had H. 6787. she] ye R.

6795. Andromecha] Andromada B, J.

6799. Eolus] solus R. 6802. began R.

6809. auoutrie] Auenture R — this] his R.

6811. disclaundre] Sclaundre R.

Eek in his tyme this Pirrus, as I reede,
 Fill into myscheeff and gret pouerte;
 And with such meyne as he dede leede,
 He was a rouere, and robbed on the se.
 And as poetis reherse, ye may see,
 Off such robberyng be sclaunder &* diffame
 This woord Pirat off Pirrus took the name.

6812 Pyrrhus fell
 into poverty
 before he died,
 and the word
 pirate is
 derived from
 his name.

6816

And as the story afftir doth deuise,
 The said Horestes gan secreli espie
 Wher that Pirrus dede sacrefise
 To for Apollo, that god to magnefie.
 Ful onwarli Horestes off enuie

6820 Finally he was
 slain by
 Orestes before
 the altar of
 Apollo.

Took a sharp suerd or Pirrus coude aduerte
 Wher that he stood, & roof hym thoruh the herte.

6824

This was the fyn off Pirrus in substaunce,
 For al his pride and gret presumpcioun.
 Off fals auoutrie folwith this vengeance:
 Losse off sum membre, pouert or prisoun,
 Or hatful sclaunder bi sum occasioun,
 Or sodeyn deth, shortli in sentence,
 Compleet in Pirrus be ful cleer euidence.

6828 That was his
 deserved end;
 for he was an
 adulterer.

6832

[Off Machaire and his suster Canace.]¹

AFFTIR this Pirrus *cam* Canace the faire,
 With teres* distillyng from hir eyen tweyne,
 And hir brother, that callid was Machaire;
 And bothe thei gan ful pitousli compleyne,
 That Fortune gan at hem so disdeyne,
 Hyndryng ther fate be woful auenture
 Touchyng ther loue, which was ageyn nature.

6836 After Pyrrhus,
 Canace and her
 brother Maca-
 reus appeared
 to Bochas com-
 plaining pite-
 ously.

He was hir brother and hir loue also,
 As the story pleynli doth declare;
 And in a bed thei lay eek bothe too,
 Resoun was non whi thei sholde spare:
 But loue that causith wo and eek weelfare,
 Gan ageyn kynde so straungeli deuise,
 That he hir wombe made sodenli tarise.

6840 They loved one
 another against
 nature,

6844

6812. Eek] Also R.

6817. &] & be B, R.

6832. MS. R *omits* lines I. 6833 to II. 749.—Compleet]
 Complaynt H.

6834. With teres] Teris B (*With* teres H, R 3, with teares P).

6836. ful] *om.* J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 35 verso.

and she had a
child by him,
which excelled
in beauty.

And fynali, myn auctour berth witnesse,
A child she hadde bi hir owne brother,
Which excellid in fauour and fairnesse;
For lik to hym off beute was non other.
But off ther loue so guyed was the rother,
That Karibdis, tween wyndis ful contraire,
Hath Canace destroied and Machaire.

6848

6852

But when
Eolus, their
father, heard
of it, he almost
went mad for
rage,

For whan ther fadir the maner dede espie
Off ther werkyng, which was so horrible,
For ire almost he fill* in frenesie,
Which for tappese was an impossible;
For the mater was froward & odible:
For which, pleykli, deuoid off al pite,
Vpon ther trespas he wolde auenged be.

6856

6860

and sought to
kill them both.
Macareus fled.
His sister had
no means of

The cause knowe, the fadir anon riht
Caste for ther deth off rigour to provide;
For which Machaire fledde out off his siht,
And from his face his presence gan to hide.
But, o alas! his suster muste abide,
Merciles, for ther hatful trespas
Suffre deth; ther was non other grace.

6864

escape, and
Eolus sent her
a sharp sword
in token of
death.

First hir fader a sharp suerd to hir sente
In tokne off deth for a remembraunce,
And whan she wiste pleykli what he mente
And conceyued his rigerous ordenaunce,
With hool purpos tobeien his plesaunce,
She gruchchith nat, but lowli off entente
Lich a meek douhter to his desir assente.

6868

6872

Like a meek
daughter she
agreed to die,
but first wrote
a little letter to
her brother.

But or she died she caste for to write
A litil lettre to hir brother deere,
A dedli compleynt compleyne & endite
With pale face and a mortal cheere,
The salt[e] teris from hir eyen cleere,
With pitous sobbyng, fet from hir hertis brynke,
Distillyng doun to tempre with hir ynke.

6876

6880

The lettre of compleynt of Canace to hir brothir
Macharie.¹

"You are the
cause of my
sorrow, once
chief source of
my joy.

OUT off hir swouh[e] whan she dede abraide, [p.85]
Knowyng no mene but deth in hir distresse,
To hir brother ful pitousli she saide:

6884

6852, 53. Contrarye, Macharye H. 6856. he fill almost B.

¹ The same heading in MS. J. leaf 36 recto.

"Cause off my sorwe, roote off myn heuynesse,
That whilom were cheeff sours off my gladnesse,
Whan bothe our ioies be will were so disposid,
Vnder o keie our hertis to be enclosid.*

6888

Whilom thou were support and sekirnesse,
Cheeff reioisshyng off my worldli plesaunce;
But now thou art the ground off my siknesse,
Welle off wanhope, off my dedli penaunce,
Which haue off sorwe grettest habundaunce
That euer yit hadde any creature,
Which mut for loue the deth alas endure!

6892

"Alas, I must
endure death
for loue!

Thou were whilom my blisse & al my trust,
Souereyn confort my sorwes to appese,
Spryng and well off al myn hertis lust;
And now, alas, cheeff roote off my disese.
But yiff my deth myht do the any ese,
O brother myn, in remembraunce off tweyne,
Deth shal to me be plesaunce & no peyne.

6896

"But if my
death be of
avail to you,
my brother, it
will be a
pleasure and
no pain.

6900

Mi cruel fader, most onmerciabie,
Ordeyned hath, it needis mut be soo,
In his rigour he is so ontretable,
Al merciles he will that it be doo, —
That we algate shal deie bothe too.
But I am glad, sithe it may been noon other,
Thou art escapid, my best beloued brother.

6904

"My cruel
father has or-
dained that
both of us
must die, and
I am glad you
escaped.

6908

This is myn eende, I may it nat asterte,
O brother myn, there is no mor to seye,
Lowli besechyng with al myn hool[e] herte
For to remembre speciali I preie,
Yiff it befall my litil sone deie,
That thou maist afftir sum mynde vpon us haue,
Suffre us bothe be buried in o graue.

6912

"And if my
little son also
die, I beg you
not to forget
us.

6916

I holde hym streihtli atwen myn armys tweyne,
Thou and Nature leide on me this charge;
He gilt[e]les with me mut suffre peyne.
And sithe thou art at fredam and at large,
Lat kynd[e]nesse our loue nat so discharge,
But haue a mynde, where-euer that thou be,
Onys a day vpon my child and me.

6920

"Let us both
be buried in
one grave, and
wherever you
may be have a
mind on us
once a year.

6888. enclosid] onclosid B.

6895. allas be deth H, R 3. 6901. off] of us R 3.

"It is not just
that our young
child should
suffer;

On the and me dependith the trespase 6924
Touchyng our gilte* and our gret offence;
But, wellaway, most angelik off face,
Our yonge child in his pur innocence
Shal ageyn riht suffre dethis violence, 6928
Tendre off lymes, God wot, ful gilt[e]lles,
The goodli faire that lith heere specheles.

he lies still as
a lamb, only a
heart of steel
could do him
injury.

A mouth he hath, but woordis hath he noone, 6932
Cannat compleyne, alas, for non outrage,
Nor* gruchith nat, but lith heer al a-loone,
Stille as a lamb, most meek off his visage.
What herte off steel coude doon to hym damage,
Or suffre hym deie, beholdyng the maneer 6936
And look benygne off his tweyne eyen cleer?

"My father,
your revenge is
too cruel!

O thou, my fader, to cruel is thi wreche,
Hardere off herte than tigre* or leoun,
To slen a child that lith withoute speche, 6940
Void off al mercy and remissioun.
And on his mooder hast no compassioun,
His youthe considred, with lippis soft as silk,
Which at my brest lith still & souketh mylk. 6944

"Was there
ever creature
who felt more
dole than I?

Ys any sorwe remembrid be writyng,
Onto my sorweful sihhes comparable?*
Or was ther euer creature lyuyng
That felte off dool a thyng mbr lamentable? 6948
For counfortles and onrecuperable
Ar thilke hepid sorwes, ful off rage,
Which han with wo oppressid my corage.

"My father is
a mortal enemy,
who seeks our
destruction.

Rekne all myscheuys in especial, 6952
And on my myscheeff remembre & ha[ue] good mynde:
Mi lord my fadir, is myn enemy mortall,
Experience inouh theroff I fynde;
For in his pursuit he hath lefft behynde, 6956
In destruccioun off the, my child and me,
Routhe and al mercy and fadirli pite.

"Alas, my
brother, that
vengeance
should come
before mercy.

And the, my brother, auoidid from his siht,
Which in no wise his grace maist atteyne, 6960
Alas that rigour, vengauce & cruel riht

6924. me & the H. 6925. gilte] gile B, J, H.
6930. that] which H, R 3. 6933. Nor] Nar B.
6939. tigre] any tigre B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P.
6946. comparable] incomparable B, J, H 5.
6952. my myschevis J. 6956. his] this H.
6961. vengauce Rigour H.

Sholde a-boue merci be lord &* souereyne!
 But cruelte doth at me so disdeyne,
 That thou, my brother, my child & also I
 Shal deie alas exiled* from al mercy.

6964

Mi fader whilom, be many sundri signe,
 Was my socour, my supportacioun,
 To the and me most gracieux & benygne,
 Our worldli gladnesse, our consolacioun.
 But loue and Fortune ha[ue] turned up-so-doun
 Our grace, alas, our welfare & our fame,
 Hard to recure, so sclaunderid is our name.

[p. 86]

"Our father
 was once be-
 nign and
 gracious to us,
 but now our
 name is spotted
 with slander,
 which is hard
 to wash away.

6968

Spot off diffamyng is hard to wasshe away,
 Whan noise and rumour abrod do folk manace;
 To hyndre a man ther may be no delay:
 For hatful fame fleeth ferr in ful short space.
 But off vs tweyne ther is non othir grace
 Sauff onli deth, and afftir deth, alas,
 Eternal sclaunder off vs; thus stant the cas.

6972

Whom shal we blame, or whom shal we atwite
 Our gret offence, sithe we may it nat hide?
 For our excus reportis to respite
 Mene is ther non, except the god Cupide.
 And thouh that he wolde for vs prouide,
 In this mateer to been our cheeff refuge,
 Poetis seyn he is blynd to been a iuge.

6980

"Whom shall
 we blame but
 the god Cupid,

He is depeynt[e] lich a blynd archer,
 To marke ariht failyng discrecioun,
 Holdyng no miseur, noutherr ferr nor neer;
 But lik Fortunys disposicioun,

6984

who is blind
 and knows not
 where his
 arrows strike.

6988

Al upon happ, void off al resoun,
 As a blynd archer with arwes sharp[e] grounde
 Off auenture yeueth many a mortal wounde.

6992

At the and me he wrongli dede marke,
 Felli to hyndre our fatal auentures,
 As ferr as Phebus shynyth in his arke,
 To make us refus to alle creatures,
 Callid us tweyne onto the woful lures
 Off diffame, which will departe neuere,
 Be newe report the noise encresyng euere.

6996

"He did wrong
 to aim at us.

7000

6962. lorde &] ladi B, J, P, H 5, R 3.

6965. exiled alas B, J, H 5, P.

6968. gracious J, P, R 3, H 5.

6992. I grownde H. 6997. us] om. H.

"Evil report
flies with swift
wings, and
good fame is
hindered by
envy. No
man complains
of his own
faults.

Odious fame with swift wengis fleeth,
But al good fame envie doth restreyn;
Ech man off other the diffautis seeth,
Yit on his owne no man will compleyne.
But al the world out crieth on vs tweyne,
Whos hatful ire bi us may nat be queemyd;
For I mut deie, my fader hath so deemyd.

7004

"Now I must
take leave of
you for ever.

Now farweel, brother, to me it doth suffice
To deie allone for our bothe sake.
And in my moste feithful humble wise,
Onto my dethward thouh I tremble & quake,
Off the for euer now my leue I take.
And onys a yeer, forget nat, but take heed,
Mi fatal day this lettre for to reed.

7008

7012

"Have mind on
me once a
year, wear
black that day
and do not
disdain to let
fall some tears
on my grave."

So shaltow han on me sum remembraunce,
Mi name enprentid in thi kalender,
Bi rehersaile off my dedli greuauance;
Were blak that day, & mak a doolful cheer.
And whan thou comest & shalt approche neer
Mi sepulture, I pray the nat disdeyne
Vpon my graue summe teris for to reyne."

7016

7020

Her sorrow was
more for her
child than for
herself, and

¶ Wrytyng hir lettir, awappid al* in dreede,
In hir riht hand hir penne gan to quake;
And a sharp suerd to make hir herte bleede
In his lefft hand, hir fader hath hir take.
And most hir sorwe was for hir childes sake,
Vpon whos face in hir barm slepyng
Ful many a teer she wepte in compleynyng.

7024

7028

with a sword
that her father
placed in her
hand she
pierced her
heart.

Afftir al this, so as she stood and quook,
Hir child beholdyng, myd off hir peynes smerte,
Withoute abood the sharp[e] suerd she took
And rooff hirself euene to the herte.
Hir child fill doun, which myht[e] nat asterte,
Hauyng non helpe to socoure hym nor saue,
But in hir blood the silff began to bathe.

7032

Eolus then
commanded
that the child
should be de-
voured by dogs.

And thanne hir fader, most cruel off entent,
Bad that the child sholde anon be take,
Off cruel houndis in haste for to be rent
And be deuoured for his mooder sake.
Off this tragedie thus an eende I make,

7036

7040

7019. shalt] shal H. 7022. al] and B, J. 7024. a] om. H
7025. his] hir H. 7035. But] om. H, R 3.

Processe off which, men may reede and see,
Concludith on myscheeff & furious cruelte.

Remembryng first, as maad is mencionn,
How that Pirrus delited hym in deede,
Whan Troie was brouht to destruccioun,
With cruel suerd[e] Troian blood to sheede,
But of such slauhtre, seeth heer the cruel meede,
As riht requereth, bi vnwar violence,
Blood shad for blood is fynal recompence.

7044

This tragedy
tells of mis-
fortune and
furious cruelty,
which is pun-
ished in the
end.

7048

Lenvoye.

WHAN surquedie oppressid hath pite, [p. 87]
And meeknesse is with tirannie bor doun

Ageyn al riht, &* hasti cruelte
To be vengable maketh no dilacioun,
What folweth theroff? — be cleer inspeccioun,
Seeth an exaample how Pirrus in his teene
Off hatful ire slouh yonge Polliceene.

7052

When pride
oppresses pity
against right,
and rigour
grants no
delay,
misfortune
follows.

7056

Kyng Eolus to rigerous was, parde,
And to vengable in his entencioun
Ageyn his childre Machaire & Canace,
So inportable was his punycioun,
Off haste procedyng to ther destruccioun;
Wers in his ire, as it was weel seene,
Than cruel Pirrus, which slouh Polliceene.

7060

King Eolus
was even
worse in his
rage than
Pyrrhus.

Noble Pryncis, prudent and attempre,
Differrith vengauce, off hih discrecioun;
Til your ire sumwhat asuagid be,
Doth neuer off doom non execucioun:
For hate and rancour perturben the resoun
Off hasti iuges, mor off entent oncleene
Than cruel Pirrus which slouh Polliceene.

7064

Noble Princes,
always defer
vengeance
until the heat
of your anger
is gone.

7068

7070

¶ Explicit liber primus.

¶ Incipit prologus libri secundi.¹

7047. slauhtre seeth] *om.* H.

7052. Ageyn al riht &] And ageyn riht B, H.

7061. haste] hasty H. 7062. his] *om.* H. 7067. non] *om.*
H, R 3.

¹ The same rubric in MS. J. leaf 38 recto.

BOOK II

[Prologue.]

Some people
may think that
I have told
enough trage-
dies,

TO summe folk, parcas, it wolde seeme, [p. 87*b*]
Touchyng the chaunges & mutabilites
Bi me rehersid, that thei myhte deeme,

Off Fortunes straunge aduersites 4
To pryncis shewed, doun pullid from ther sees,
The tragedies auhte inouh suffice
In compleynyng, which ye han herd deuise.

for it is de-
pressing when
no joy is
mingled with
pain,

The stori pitous, the processe lamentable, 8
Void off ioie, al gladnesse and* plesaunce,
A thyng to greuous and to inportable,
Where-as no merthe is medlid with greuaunce,
Al upon compleynt standith thalliaunce, 12
Most whan Fortune, who that hir cours weel knewe,
Chaungith old ioie into sorwes newe.

and worst of all
when former
gladness is
turned into
new sorrow.

For onto hym that neuer wiste off wo, 16
Remembraunce off his old gladnesse,
Whan his weelfare & plesaunce is ago,
And neuer aforne knew off non heuynesse, —
Such vnwar chaung, such vnkouth wrechidnesse
Causith in pryncis, thoruh newe dedli trouble, 20
Afftir ther fallyng ther sorwes to be double.

But old exam-
ples of princes
who have fallen
teach all estates
how to avoid
vices.

Olde exammples off pryncis that ha[ue] fall, 24
Ther remembraunce off newe brouht to mynde,
May been a merour to estatiss all,
How thei in vertu shal remedies fynde
Teschewe vices, off such as wer maad blynde,
Fro sodeyn fallyng hemsiluen to preserue,
Longe to contune and thank off God disserue.* 28

The fall of one
is a bright
lantern to an-
other, for as
men deserve, so
are they re-
warded.

The fall off on is a cleer lanterne
To teche a-nother what he shal eschewe;
Pereil off on, is, who can discernen,
Schoole and doctryn from pereil to remewe. 32
As men disserue such guerdoun ther mut sewe;

9. and] and al B, J, H 5.

14. chaungyng H — Ioies J, ioies H 5, P.

20. Causid H. 24. to] of H, R 3.

28. disserue] to disserue B, J, P, H 5.

33. ther] om. J, H 5 — ther mut] mvt thei H.

In vice nor vertu no man may God deceyue,
Lik ther desertis ther meede thei [shal] receyue.

Who folweth vertu lengest doth perseuere,
Be it in riches, be it in pouerte;
Liht off trouthe his cleerneske kepith euere
Ageyn thassautis off al aduersite.

36 Those who fol-
low virtue
endure longest,
for virtue is
the source of
prosperity.

Vertu is cause off long prosperite;
And whan pryncis fro vertu doun declyne,
Ther fame is shroudid vnder the cliptik lyne.

40

For fals Fortune, which turneth as a ball, [p. 88]
Off vnwar chaunges thouh men hir wheel atwite,
It is nat she that pryncis gaff the fall,
But vicious lyuyng, pleyntli to endite:
Thouh God aboue ful ofte hem doth respite,
Longe abidith, and doth his grace sende
To this entent, thei sholde ther liff amende.

44 It is not
Fortuna who
causes princes
to fall, but
vicious living,

48

For ther weelfare and ther abidyng longe,
Who aduertisith, dependith nat on chaunce.
Good liff and vertu maketh hem to be stronge,
And hem assureth in long perseueraunce;
Vertu on Fortune maketh a diffiaunce,
That Fortune hath no domynacioun
Wher noble pryncis be gouerned be resoun.

52 and Fortuna
has no
power over
princes who
are governed
by reason.

56

But such as list[e] nat correctid be
Bexauple off othre fro vicious gouernaunce,
And fro ther vices list nat for to fle:
Yiff thei be troubled in ther hih puissaunce,
Thei arette it Fortunys variaunce,
Touchyng the giltes that thei deden vse,
Ther demerites ful falsli to excuse.

60 Those who will
not learn to
abandon their
evil ways by
the example
of others,
wrongly
ascribe their
fall to
Fortune's
variance,

Vertu conserueth pryncis in ther glorie *
And confermeth ther dominaciouns;
And vicis put ther price out off memorie,
For ther trespassis and ther transgressiouns.
And in alle such sodeyn mutaciouns,
Thei can no refut nor no bet socour,
But ageyn Fortune to maken ther clamour.

64 and know no
better than to
make an
outcry against
her deceitful-
ness, as if
they them-
selves were
innocent.

68

35. shal] *om.* J, H 5.

44. vnwar] soden H — wheel] will H.

49. thei] bat thei H.

63. ful] *om.* H — to] *om.* J, H 5. 64, 66, gloire, memoire B.

67. 2nd ther] *om.* H.

Make an outcri on hir doubilnesse,
 As no gilt were in ther owne deede; 72
 Thus ontreuili thei calle hir a goddesse,
 Which lite or nouht may helpe at such a neede.
 But yiff thei hadde God in loue & dreede,
 Trustid his lordshep in herte, will & thouht, 76
 Thei sholde Fortune pleyntli sette at nouht.

Many stories
 have already
 been told, which
 shew princes
 how they may
 profit by others'
 falling.

Euidencis ful expert and palpable,
 Toform rehersed, told off dyuers ages,
 Worldli glorie* veyn and ful onstable, 80
 With deceites double off ther visages,
 Shewyng to pryncis ferme off ther corages,
 Be these exaumples, how and in what wise
 By othris* fallyng thei shal hemsilff chastise. 84

Comets, strange
 constellations,
 lightning and
 thunder and
 rumbling of the
 earth are all
 signs bidding
 mighty princes
 beware and
 amend their
 lives before it
 is too late.

Signes shewed and toknes in the heuene,
 Dyuers cometis and constellaciouns,
 Dreedful thundryng, feerful firi leuene, 88
 Rumour in erthe and gret discenciouns,
 Disobeisaunce in sondry regiouns,
 Shewen exaumples, ful weel afferme I dar,
 To myhti pryncis, hem bidding to be war,
 Ther liff tamende or the Lord do smyte, 92
 Thoruh negligence or it be to late;
 And or the suerd off vengauce kerue & bite,
 Into vertues ther vicious liff translate,
 Cherisshe rihtwisnesse, ageyn al wrong debate, 96
 With dreed off God make hemsiluen stronge:
 Than is no doubte thei shal enduren longe.

Indurate the
 heart that cannot
 profit by the fate
 of other men.

Who is nat war bi othres chastisyng,
 Othre bi hym shal chastised be: 100
 Hard is is that herte, which for no writyng,
 For no dottryn nor non auctorite,
 For non exaample will frem his vices flee;
 To indurat is his froward entent, 104
 Which wil nat suffre his hardnesse to relent.

Soft raindrops
 pierce hard
 stones,

The rounde dropis off the smothe reyn,
 Which that discende & falle from alofte

80. gloire B — veyn] full veyn H.

83. how and in what wise] full wele afferme I dare H (*but corrected later*).

84. By othris] Bothris B — To myhti princis hem bidding to be war H.

94. &] or H. 100. shal chastised] chastised shal H.

On stonys harde, at eye as it is seyn,
 Perceth ther hardnesse with ther fallyng offte,
 Al-be in touchyng, water is but soffte;
 The percyng causid be force nor puissaunce,
 But off fallyng be long contynuaunce.

108

Semblabli, off riht I dar reherse,
 Offte reedyng on bookis fructuous
 The hertis sholde off prudent pryncis perse,
 Synke in ther mynde & make hem vertuous
 Teschewe all thyng that is vicious:
 For what auaieth thexamples that thei reede,
 To ther reedyng yiff contraire be the deede?

112

and the frequent reading
 of good books
 ought to make
 princes
 virtuous.

Cunnyng and deede, who can comprehende,
 In cleer conceites thei be thynges tweyne;
 And yiff cunnyng doth the deede amende,
 Than atwen hem is maad a myhti cheyne,
 A noble thyng, and riht souereyne:
 For thanne off cunnyng the labour is weel spent,
 Whan deede folweth, & bothe been off assent.

116

120

If actions are
 governed by
 true knowledge
 one's labour
 is well spent.

124

Thus Iohn Bochas procedyng in his book,
 Which in noumbre is callid the secounde,
 Gan for to write, and his purpos took
 To sette in stories such as he hadde founde,
 Off entent alle vices to confounde
 Be thexamples which he dede expresse.
 And at the gynnyng off his besynesse,

[p. 89]

128

Thus John
 Bochas begins
 his Second
 Book.

Myhti Saul to hym dede appeere,
 Kyng off Israel, pitousli wepyng,
 Dedli off face, and with an hidous cheere,
 His vois Ibroke be manyfold sobbyng;
 And to myn auctour his sorwe compleynyng,
 Requeryng hym, togidre whan thei mette,
 First in his book his woful-fate to sette.

132

136

First Saul appeared,
 begging
 him, in a voice
 broken by sobs,
 to write his
 story.

140

Anon afftir, I off entencioun,
 With penne in hande faste gan me speede,
 As I koude, in my translacioun,
 In this labour ferthere to proceede,
 My lord cam forbi, and gan to taken heede;

144

And whilst I
 continued in
 my translation,
 my lord, Duke
 Humphrey,
 came by and
 bade me set an
 envoy at the
 end of each

126. off] at H, R 3. 127. Thus] This H. 129. and] In H.

130. hadde] hath H.

136. an hidous] a pitouse H, a pitous R 3.

140. to] om. H, R 3.

This myhti prynde, riht manli & riht wis,
 Gaff me charge in his prudent auys,
 That I sholde in eueri tragedie, 148
 Afftir the processe made mencionn,
 At the eende sette a remedie,
 With a lenvoie conueied be resoun,
 And afftir that, with humble affeccionn, 152
 To noble pryncis lowli it directe,
 Bi othres fallyng [thei myht] themsilff correcte.*
 And I obeyed his biddying and plesaunce,
 Vnder support off his magnificence. 156
 As I coude, I gan my penne auauunce,
 Al-be I was bareyn off eloquence,
 Folwyng myn auctour in substaunce & sentence:
 For it suffised, pleyntli, onto me, 160
 So that my lord my makyng took at gre.

tragedy for the
 advantage
 of noble princes;

and, to please
 my lord, I
 obeyed, al-
 though barren
 of eloquence.

¶ Finis prologi libri secundi.

¶ Sequitur liber secundus.

[How Saul, Kyng of Ierusalem born of low degre as
 long as he dred god was obedient to him/ and
 rewlid by good counsaile had many grete dis-
 confitures/ but atte last/ for his pride presump-
 cioun and grete disobysaunce/ he lost his crowne
 and was slayn by Philestees.]¹

Saul was born
 of the line of
 Benjamin.
 Once, when
 seeking his
 father's asses,

THIS said[e] Saul, of whom I spak toforn, [p. 91]
 Ful weel compact & large of his stature,
 Off the lyne of Beniamyn eek born, 164
 His fader Ceis was callid in Scripture,
 Whos assis whilom leffte* ther pasture; —
 Space off thre daies Saul hadde hem souht,
 Loste his labour and ne fond hem nouht. 168
 For thei were gon out so ferr a-stray,
 So disseuered he ne koude hem meete,
 Til that a child hym suyng al the way
 Gaff hym counseil his labour for to lete, 172
 And that he sholde gon to the prophete,
 Which was ful famous holde in Israel,
 Off whom the name was callid Samuel.

a child
 counselled
 him to leave off
 and repair to
 Samuel,

154. correcte] to correcte B.

166. leffte] lefften B, leften J, lost H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 38 recto. as long] aslong J.

- Which Saul made in his hous to dyne,
 Receyued hym off gret affeccioun;
 And be precept & ordenaunce deuyne,
 Samuel made no prolongacioun,
 But shadde the hooli sacred vnccioun
 Vpon the hed off Saul, down knelyng,
 And ful deuoutli off Israel made hym kyng,
 Off goddis peeple to ha[ue] the gouernaunce,
 With sceptre & crowne, and hool the regalie.
 And his noblesse mor myhtili tauaunce,
 With meek[e]nesse to reule his monarchie,
 God gaff to hym a sperit off prophecie,
 Which was gret glorie* to his magnyficence,
 Off futur thynges to haue prescience.
- And whil that he was meek & humble in deede,
 Void off pride and fals presumpcioun,
 And prudent counsail with hym dede leede,
 Hym to gouerne bi good discrecioun,
 He fond quiete thoruh al his regeoun;
 No foreyn enmy durst hym tho werreye,
 Whil he the Lord meekli dede obeie.
- Non enmy myhte ageyn[e]s hym recure
 Thoruh non enprises, but sore dede hym dreede; —
 Made many gret disconfiture
 Thoruh his force, knythod & manheede
 On Philistes, and dauntid eek in deede
 Too myhti kynges, the ton off Ammonytes,
 And a-nother, that gouerned Moabites.
- He was founde eek strong and victorious,
 The Palestynes bryngyng to myschaunce;
 Geyn Ydumes, so myhti and famous,
 Thoruh his knyhtli prudent gouernaunce,
 That he ther pride brouhte onto vttraunce,
 Outraied hem off wisdam and manheede, —
 Primo Regum, as ye may pleykli reede.
- He was a sone callid off o yeer,
 In Israel whan his regne began,
 Stable off herte and benygne off cheer,
 Froward nor sturdi to no maner man.
 Al that while loue off the peeple he wan,

176 who received
him with affection and
anointed him
King of Israel.

180

184 God gave Saul
a spirit of
prophecy,

188

192 and he ruled
with wisdom
and prospered

196

and was successful against
his enemies,

200

204 and defeated
among others
the Idumeans,
as you may
read in the
First Book of
Kings.

208

212 So long as he
remained kind
and stable of
heart, he kept
the love of his
people;

179. no] no long H, noo longe R 3. 188. gloire B.
 195. tho] to H, J, P, H 5. 204. founde] om. H, R 3.

The tyme, I meene, whil he was iust & stable, 216
And in his werkis nat founde* variable.

but when he grew proud and wilful and no longer obeyed God, But whan that pride gan his herte enhaunce,
Wilfulness and fals malencolie
Outraied resoun, to ha[ue] the gouernaunce 220
Off his olde famous policie,
And hadde forgetyn in his fantasie
To knowe the Lord & meekli sue his lawe,
God from his crowne his grace gan withdrawe. 224

God withdrew his grace from him. Thonkynde werm off foryetilnesse
In his herte hadde myned thoruh the wall,
Whan he to God, for his kynd[e]nesse,
Gaff no laude nor no thank attall, 228
Which hadde hym reised onto estat royall
Fro pore degre, mong al his kyn alone,
Be synguler fauour to sette hym in his throne.

What is more froward than the presumption of a boor suddenly raised to power? What thyng in herte mor froward mai be thouht 232
Than is the sodeyn fals presumpcioun
Off a wrechche that cam vp off nouht,
To yeue hym lordshepe and dominacioun?
And for to make a pleyn comparisoun, 236
Men sholde off resoun dreede a leoun lasse
Than the reudnesse off a crownyd asse.

A lion is less to be feared than a crowned ass. What thyng to God is mor abhomynable
Than pride upreised out off pouerte? 240
And nothyng gladli is founde mor vengable
Than ar wrechchis set in hih degre:
For from his stok kynde may nat fle;
Ech thyng resortith, how ferr euer it go, 244
To the nature which that it cam fro.

What is more revengeful than a wretch set in high degree? Every creature follows his inherited nature. Frut and apples taken ther tarage [p. 92]
Wher thei first greuh off the same tre,
And semblabli ech kynreede & lynage — 248
Onys a yeer it will non othir be —
Be tokne or signe, at eye as men may see,
Draweth comounli in eueri creature
Sum tech to folwen afftir his nature. 252

217. founde] founden B.

230. mong] among H, R 3. 238. "marke thys," in a later hand, and a line drawn in margin opposite the following four and a half stanzas in J.

239. is more to god H. 242. ar] er H. 245. the] ther H.

I write nat this in rebuk off pouert;
 But for suche onli as that it disserue:
 God off his myht, as men be weel expert,
 May hem in vertu encrese and conserue,
 From al myscheeff a poore man preserue,
 Reise hem on heihte to dominaciouns
 Thoruh hih noblesse off ther condiciouns.

Be influence God may his grace sheede
 Wher he fynt cause onli be meeknesse,
 A poore man to reise hym vp in deede
 Onto thestat off vertuous noblesse;
 For out off vertu cometh al gentillesse,
 In poore and riche mak non excepcioun,
 But hem comende lik ther condicioun.

A poore man which that is vertuous
 And dredith God in his pouerte,
 Ech thyng eschewyng that is vicious,
 And to his power doth trouthe & equite, —
 I dar riht weel, what-euer that he be,
 Puttyng no rebuk onto his kynreede,
 But calle hym gentil veraili in deede.

But kyng Saul was contrarious,
 Disobeisaut founde in his werkyng,
 Whan God made hym to be victorious
 On Amalech, where Agag was kyng,
 Hym comaundyng* to spare no maner thyng,
 Man nor woman, beeste nor child socoure,
 But that his suerd sholde al quyk thyng deuoure. 280

But Saul wrouhte al in other wise,
 Ech thyng reseruyng that was fair to siht;
 And off entent to make a sacrefise,
 Afftir his victorie* he shoop hym anon riht,
 Fattest beestis he ches, & hath hem diht
 Toward the fir to maken his offryng,
 And fro deth he spared Agag the kyng.

He was repreued afftir of Samuel,
 To Godis biddyng for he was contraire,
 As abiect to regne in Israel,

I cast no slur
 on poverty: I
 blame those
 only who de-
 serve reproof.

256

260 God may raise
 a poor man to
 nobility, for
 all gentility
 comes from
 virtue,

264

268 and a poor
 man who is
 upright and
 fears God can
 only be called
 gentle.

272

276 But Saul was
 disobedient
 when God bade
 him massacre
 the Amalekites
 and destroy
 all their
 possessions.

284 He even spared
 the life of
 Agag their
 king.

288 Reproved by
 Samuel, his
 power of fore-
 seeing failed,

257. do preserve H. 258. on] of H.

261. fyndith R 3, findeth P. 262. to] om. H.

271. I dar riht weel] I dar say H, R 3, P.

278. comaundyng] comaundid B, J. 284. victoire B, J.

and he was
tormented by
an evil spirit.

That al good hope in hym gan disespaire;
His grace, his myht gan pallen & appaie,
His prophecie afftir hath hym failed,
And with a feend he was also trauailed.

292

Thus Fortune
cast him down,
and God trans-
lated his crown
to David.

Thus from hir wheel Fortune cast hym doun,
Aualed hym from his roial see;
And God also took away the crown,
Bothe from hym and his posterite,
And set up Dauid for his humilite.
Loo, how the Lord his doomys can deuyde
Tenhaunce meeknesse and tabate pryde!

296

300

Saul was
jealous of David
because he slew
Goliath with
only a staff-
sling,

Saul endured in his frenesie,
A wikked sperit so sore hym dede assaile;
Onto Dauid euer he hadde envie,
That he was hardi tentren in bataile, —
With a stafslynge, void off plate & maile,
Slouh Golias, withoute feer or dreed,
Pulled out his suerd[e] & smet off his hed.

304

308

and when
young girls sang
David's praises,

At ther repairyng hom out off the feeld,
Whan Dauid hadde slay[e]n this Golie,
Yonge maidnes whan [that] thei beheeld
The grete victory, thei in ther armony
In laude off Dauid thus gan synge & crie:
"Saul hath slayn a thousand thoruh his myht,
Dauid ten thousand, the lusty yonge knyht!"

312

Saul felt angry
and slighted,
and conspired
David's death.

Saul disdeyned and seide frowardli,
"Thei grauntid han a thousand to my name,
And to the sone heer off Ysai
Youe ten thousand to encrece* his fame,
Which is to me a rebeuk and a shame."
Wherupon this Saul, fret with ire,
Off yonge Dauid gan the deth conspire.

316

320

He knew in his
heart that the
singing was
prophetic.

In his herte he hadde a fantasie
Off ther syngyng whan that he took heed,
Dempte it was a maner prophecie,
That Dauid sholde preferrid be in deede
And to the crowne afftir hym succeede.
Thouhte his childre, as he gan dyuyne,
Sholde be depryued off the roial lyne.

324

328

294. also] *om.* H.

317. han] have H. 319. to encrece] tencrece B, H, J.

319, 20 are transposed in R 3.

Thus day be day Saul weies souhte
 To sle[en] Dauid, pley[n]li yiff he myhte,
 Al-be-it so that he no malice thouhte,
 But euer kept hym lowli in his sihte.
 Therfore good eure & grace on hym alihte;
 For ay the Lord off his magnyficence
 Ageyn tirantis preserueth innocence.

[p. 93] David had no
 envy of Saul,

332

And as the Bible pley[n]li doth us lere,
 This Dauid hadde in his tendre age
 For his noblesse the kyngis douhter deere,
 Callid Michol, ioyned be mariage.
 And whan that Saul fill in any rage,
 Dauid anon, tasswagen his woodnesse,
 Touchid his harpe & brouht him in gladnesse.

and was
 married to his
 daughter
 Michal;

340

Saul ful offte gan Dauid to enchace
 And werreie thoruhout all his londis,
 Thoruh desertis hym pursue & manace,
 Off entent tashet hym up in bondis
 Or taslaie hym, yiff he com in his hondis.
 But fynali God thoruh his ordynaunce
 Preserued his knyht from al maner myschaunce.

344 but Saul
 constantly
 pursued
 him,

348

Saul ful offte was brouht to myscheeff,
 Yit ay fro deth[e] Dauid dede hym saue;
 And heeroff this was a special preeff,
 Whan Dauid kitte his garnement in the caue.
 And mo toknys yiff ye list to haue,
 Another tyme Dauid also kepte
 The liff off Saul, whan he lay & slepte.

352 although
 David often
 spared his
 life,

356

The cas was this: as thei lay hosteieng
 Nat ferr assonder, and Saul lay and sleepe,
 Al his peeple aboute[n] hym slepyng,
 And onpuruieid lik a flok off sheepe;
 Off which[e] thyng Dauid took good keepe,
 Doun descendid, and made no delay,
 Cam to the tente wher kyng Saul lay.

and once
 entered his
 unguarded
 tent

360

The spere off Saul stondyng at his hed,
 Dauid took it and wente his way anon;
 Off his comyng ther was no man took heed,

and carried
 off his spear,
 while Saul
 and his men
 slept.

364

334. alihte] hath liht H.

345. thoruhout] thoruh H, R 3.

348. tasslayn H, to haue sleyn R 3. 354. garment H, P.

359. and] om. H. 361. lik] lik as H.

366. his way] away H.

For Saul slepte and his men echon. 368
 And whan that he vp to the hill was gon,
 Toward Saul ageyn he cast his look,
 Made a noise that all his knyhtes wook.

David then
 woke them and
 told Abner
 that he had

First to Abnor, prynce off his cheualrie,
 Dauid seide these woordis in sentence: 372
 "Abnor," quod he, "thou hast doon gret folie,

This day shewed a gret negligence,
 To suffre off Saul the magnyficence 376
 In pereil stonde, and non heed [to] take,
 Aboute his persone to make his knyhtis wake.

been reckless of
 the king's life
 and deserved
 death and tor-
 ture for his
 carelessness.

Thou art to blame for thi reklesnesse,
 To leue the kyng stonde in so gret a dreede, 380
 In slep to haue mor sauour & suetnesse
 Than off his liff [for] to taken heede.

Such negligence requereth for his meede
 Deth and torment, be rihtful iuggement, 384
 Aboute a prynce whan folk be negligent.

"See, here is
 his spear, and
 now believe
 how unready
 you were!

And yiff thou list to seen an euidence,
 How that his liff stood in iupartie,
 See heer his spere, & yiff therto credence, 388
 How onproudyed ye were on your partie, —
 Saul nor thou, ye may it nat denye,
 Your liff, your deth, *your* power, *your* puissaunce
 This day God put hool in my gouernaunce. 392

"But I have
 never offended
 against him, as
 God knows."

But me taquiten off pur innocence,
 As eueri man sholde onto his kyng,
 And to declare in me was non offence
 Ageyn his noblesse in will nor in werkyng, 396
 As God weel wot, that knoweth euery thyng,
 That I neuer be no conspiracie
 Wrouhte nor compassid ageyn his regalie."

Thus David
 returned good
 for evil,

Loo, heer exaample off parfit pacience 400
 Ageyn malice to shewe kynd[e]nesse!
 Wher Saul shewed his mortal violence,
 Dauid aquit hym with suffraunce & goodnesse,
 The tirant venquysshid bi his prudent meeknesse. 404
 Men ageyn trouthe may weel a werre gynne,
 But at the eende the palme he doth ay wyne.

382. for] *om.* P, R 3.

391. power *your* puissaunce] *puys*saunce *your* power H.

392. governeer H. 394. onto] to H.

For off this story yiff that ye take heed,
 Saul is falle for his frowardnesse
 Into myscheeff and into sodeyn dreed;
 For Philistees, the Bible berth witnessse,
 With a gret power gan ther wardis dresse
 Vpon kyng Saul auenged for to be,
 Ther tentis pihte beside Gelboe.

and Saul,
 408 finally attacked
 by the Philis-
 tines, at
 Gelboa,

Wheroff kyng Saul, astonyd in his herte,
 Hadde lost his sperit off knyhtli hardynesse,
 And speciali whan he dede aduerte
 Prophete was non his harmys to redresse,
 Off futur thynges trouthe to expresse
 In Israel, which cast hym in gret dreed,
 Because that tyme Samuel was ded.

[p. 94] became afraid;
 and as he had
 416 exiled all the
 prophets and
 diviners, and
 Samuel was
 dead,

For Saul hadde cast out alle dyuynes
 From Israel and ech dyuyneresse,
 Nat-withstandyng [that] the Palestynes
 Were rise ageyn, his power to oppresse;
 And he ne knew no maner sorceresse
 Off whom he myhte any counseil take,
 And he off God that tyme was forsake.

420 he went to a
 woman
 called in
 Israel a
 pythoness,

In this wise he stood disconsolat,
 Counseil off God nor prophete kneuh he non,
 But lik a man most infortunat,
 Ongraciousli he spedde hym foorth anon,
 And secreli this Saul is foorth gon
 To a woman that sholde hym reede and wisse,
 In Israel callid a phetonyssse.

428

Which is a name, as clerkis writen all,
 And office, who that takith heede,
 Soulis off men ageyn to clepe & call —
 I meene such[e] that toforn wer dede —
 Which is a thyng straunge for to reede,
 That any woman sholde, who list to lere,
 Make soulis of dede men appeere.

436 who could call
 the souls of
 dead men back
 to earth, which
 is a very
 strange thing,

440

407. yiff that ye take] who that takith H.

413. Ther] The H.

423. that] *om.* H, J, P, H 5, R 3.

430. lik] *om.* J.

433. that] which H.

434. Phitonesse H.

438. that] as H.

441. appeere] tappeere H, to apper R 3, to appere P.

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and, as it seems
to me, not
according to
reason, that an
invisible thing
should appear
to bodily eyes.

Vnkouth & straunge is ther opynyoun,
And to my witt a maner impossible,
Nat accordyng, me semeth, to resoun,
Nor lik a thyng which that is credible,
That a soule, off nature inuisible,
Mihte appeere or shewe visibly
Onto eyen which that be bodily.

444

448

But I shall let
scholars and
divines

But or that I any ferther flitte,
List I were holde to presumptuous,
To dyuynys this mater I commytte
And wise clerkis that be vertuous,
In ther wittis subtil and corious
To conclude, as it doth hem seeme,
In this mater a trouthe for to deeme,

452

decide whether
it was the soul
of Samuel or
some other
spirit who told

Whethir it was the soule off Samuel,
Or other sperit, that she dede call,
Which that tolde the kyng off Israel
Off the bataile that sholde afftir fall,
His auenturis and his myscheuys all.
And off his deth he tolde also in deede,
And how Dauid sholde afftir hym succeede,

456

460

Saul, that for
his disobedience
he should die in
battle with the
Philistines and
be succeeded
by David.

Because onli off his disobeisaunce,
As it is write, and for his reclesnesse,
On Amalech for he took nat vengauce.
Thus the sperit bar to hym wnesse.

464

Whereoff Saul fell in gret heuynesse,
Knowyng no mene tescape out off this doute,
But take his fortune as it cometh aboute.

468

Tolde hym also his enmyes were so wroth,
The Philistees beside Gelboe,
In that bataile he and his childe both
Sholde deie that day, off necessite;

472

His cheualrie shal sconfited be,
Off his regne there is no lengere date,
For God from hym his kyngdam will translate.

476

After his defeat,
Saul bade his
squire run him
through the
heart,

And thus Saul retourned is agayn,
His meyne afftir brouht to disconfiture.
And whan he sauh al his peple slayn,
And how ther was no mene to recure
In that dedli woful auenture,

480

443. Impossible H. 447. or] & H, nor J.

449. or] er H. 455] For in this mater I can nat deeme H.

He bad his squier take his suerd as blyue,
And thoruh the herte that he sholde hym ryue,

That his enmyes, which were oncircumsised,
Sholde ha[ue] no power, in story it is founde,
To falle vpon hym as thei han deuised,
To yeuen hym his laste fatal wounde,
His hih noblesse at myscheeff to confounde.
But his squyer, for feer of God and dreed,
Wold nat assente to doon so foul a deed;

484 so that he
should not fall
into the hands
of his foes; but
the squire
dared

488

To slen his lord he gretli was afferd,
A thyng hatful in eueri manys siht.
But Saul took the pomel off his suerd,
And in the ground ful deepe anon it piht;
And in al hast possible that he myht,
Made the poynt, in his furious payne,
To perce his herte & parte euene on tweyne.

492 not kill him,
and Saul had
to fall on his
own sword,

496

The Philistees, anon as he was ded,
Spoiled hym off his roial armure,
Dismembrid hym and smet off his hed,
And in tokne off ther disconfiture
Took the spoiles with al ther besi cure
And theroff made, in al ther beste entent,
To Astaroth* off pride a gret present.

[p. 95] and was des-
poiled and
dismembered
by the
500 Philistines.

504

Thus was Saul slay[e]n in sentence
Off Philistees vpon Gelboe,
Forsake off God for inobedience,
Abiect also down from his roial see:
And thus for lakkyng off humylite,
Off God he was for euere set a-side.
Loo, heer the eende off surquedie & pride!

508 Thus Saul, for-
saken by God
for disobedi-
ence, was cast
down from his
throne and
slain.

¶ Lenvoye.

HATH mynde on Saul, which to estat roiall
Fro louh degre was callid for meeknesse;
But *presumpcioun* made hym haue a fall,
Off God abiect for his frowardnesse,
Loste his crowne, the Bible berth witenesse.
And cause was, for his disobeisauce;
To Godis biddying he gaff non attendaunce.

512 Remember the
fate of Saul,
who rose from
low degree and
lost his crown
for disobedi-
ence.

516

483. that] *om.* H. 495 al] the H.
499. off] & of H. 504. Astraoth B, J. 514. to have H.

God asks of us
only an honest
heart, but he
punishes all
who disobey
him.

Noble Princes,
if you would
keep your
crowns, be just
and obey God.

Virtue of Vir-
tues is true
obedience.
Without it all
worldly policy
were destroyed.

Where
discretion
rules without
wilfulness, the
people should
obey their
princes.

Obedience
brings welfare,
joy and prosper-
ity to all
lands;

God nat axeth no mor off man att all
But hool[e] herte withoute doubilnesse, 520
For alle the giffes, which in especiall
He gaff to man off his hih goodnesse;
But he chastisith al onkynd[e]nesse,
Such as be rebel for to do plesaunce, 524
And to his biddying ne yeue non attendaunce.
Noble Pryncis, vertu most pryncepall
You to conserue in your hih noblesse,
Is to enprente in your memoriall 528
Feith, equite, alle wrongis to redresse,
To susteene trouthe and rihtwisnesse,
And tofor God holdeth euenli the balaunce,
And to his biddying yeueth hool your attendaunce. 532

¶ The comendacion of Bochas oppon the vertu of obedience.¹

VERTU off vertues, most off excellence,
Which that hath most souereyn suffisaunce,
Is the vertu off trewe obedience,
Which set all thyng in rihtful gouernaunce: 536
For ne wer nat this prudent ordenaunce,
Summe tobeie and summe aboue to guie,
Destroied were al worldli policie.
Where that vertu and hih discrecioun 540
Auoided han from hem al wilfulness,
Be title onli off domynacioun,
Trewli lyuyng vpon rihtwisnesse,
Wrong and errours iustli to redresse, 544
Off trouthe I may riht weel afferme & seie,
The peeples meekli ther biddying sholde obeie.
This noble vertu off feithful obeisaunce,
Establisshid vpon humylite, 548
Which includith no double variaunce,
In all regeouns and in ech contre
Causeth weelfare, ioie and prosperite;
And as vertu, cheeff and souereyne, 552
Al vicious riot it pleyntli doth restreyne.

519. of man no more H. This stanza is transposed with the next in R 3. 526. vertu] of vertu H.

528. Is to] it is (Emprent) H. 531. holdeth] hold P.

541. have H. 546. sholde] did H. 553. riot] root H.

¹ "A commendacioun," etc., MS. J. leaf 40 a, otherwise agreeing with B.

Obedience eek, as men may see,
 Falsnesse exilith and al rebelloun;
 For bi atempraunce,* riht and equite
 Stant the weelfare off eueri regeoun:
 For the meeknesse and low subieccioun
 Off comountes halt up the regalias
 Off lordshepes & off all monarchies.

556 it excludes de-
 ceit and re-
 bellion;

And, no doubte, whan lordshepes off entent
 Besi been the souereyn Lord to queeme,
 To ther subiectis do rihtful iugement,
 In conscience as riht and resoun deeme,
 Than shal ther crowne and [ther] diadeeme
 Vpon ther hed perseuere & fresshli shyne,
 And make subiectis to her biddyng enclyne.

560 and when
 princes are
 zealous to
 please God
 and do right,
 they shall
 keep ther
 crowns,

Thus obeisaunce pleyntli at a woord,
 In such as han lordshepe and souereynthe,
 Doon off entent to ther souereyn Lord,
 Shal cause hem regne in long prosperite,
 And ther subiectis off humylite,
 For ther noble famous gouernaunce,
 Ay to be redy vnder ther obeisaunce.

568 and their
 subjects will
 obey them.

For who that serueth the Lord off Lordis all, [p. 96]
 And hath the peple in his subieccioun,
 God will keepe hym that he shal nat fall,
 Longe preserue his domynacioun;
 But ageynward, whan wisdam and resoun
 Been ouermaistried with sensualite,
 Farweel the floures off ther felicite!

572

576 The ruler who
 serves God
 shall not fall.

Obedience bluntith the sharpnesse
 Off cruel suerdis in tirantis hondis,
 And meeknesse appesith the felnesse
 Off hasti vengauce, brekith atoo the bondis;
 Eek pacience set quyete in londis:
 And where these thre contune in comountes,
 Long pes perseuereth in kyngdames & cites.

580

584 Obedience,
 humility, and
 patience in
 princes bring
 peace to their
 realms

Obedience doth also restreyne
 Conspiracies and fals collusiouns;
 Whan she stant onpartid, nat on tweyne,

588

and restrain
 conspiracies.

556. batempraunce B.

565. 2nd ther] om. J, H 5, P. 567. enclyne] declyne H.

568. Thus] This H. 569. han] have H.

576. peeplis H. 586. settith R 3, setteth P.

588. in] om. H, R 3, P.

- There is no dreed off no discenciouns: 592
 For she combyneth the trewe opynyouns
 In peeplis hertis, ful weel afor prouyded,
 Vnder pryncis to stonde hool ondeuyded.
- Subjects are
 not rebellious
 to princes who
 honour God. Wher pryncis be meek, humble & debonaire 596
 Towardis God off hool affeccioun,
 Ther subiectis be gladli nat contraire
 In ther seruise be no rebelloun;
 For ther is founde no deuysioun, 600
 But hed & membris, ech for his partie,
 Be so gouerned be prudent policie.
- But Saul was
 put down for
 his obstinacy. Contrariousli Saul was put down,
 Abiect off God for his obstynacie, 604
 Put from his sceptre, his crowne, his regeoun,
 Off Israel loste al the monarchie,
 For he list nat make off his alie,
 Off frowardnesse and wilful necligence, 608
 This noble vertu callid obedience.
- As it is incumb-
 ent on kings
 to rule benevo-
 lently, so do
 obedience and
 reverence ap-
 pertain to their
 subjects, and For as it longith in kyngdamys & citees,
 Vnder a keye off on benyuolence,
 Pryncis, kynges to gouerne [in] ther sees, 612
 So apperteneth deu[e] reuerence
 To ther subiectis bi obedience,
 Tobeie ther lordis, as thei been off degre,
 Be tite off riht in eueri comeunte. 616
- there is neither
 obedience nor
 unity when
 subjects pre-
 sume against
 their princes. For obeisaunce, iff it be discernyd
 With Argus eyen, who that taketh heed,
 As riht requereth is nat weel gouernyd,
 Whan the membris presume ageyn the hed, 620
 Off gouernaunce ther is no parfit speed;
 From vnyte thei gon a froward weie,
 Whan subiectis ther pryncis disobeie.

[How kyng Roboam for gevyng feith to yonge
 counsaile lost the beneuolence of his peple and
 deied a fool.]¹

The young
 King Rehob-
 oam, son of
 Solomon,

ONTO Iohn Bochas in ordre next ther cam, 624
 With ful gret dool and lamentacioun,
 The yonge kyng callid Roboam,

605. 3rd his] & his H. 610. in.] to H.
 617. obeisaunce] obedience H — discernyd] descrived H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 40 recto.

Sone and next heir to Salamoun,
 Entryng be tittle off iust successioun,
 Bësouhte myn auctour to make off his folie
 And off his fallyng a pitous tragedie.

628 besought my
 author to tell
 the tragedy
 of his fall.

First whan he entred into his regeoun,
 Twelue tribus gouernynge in deede,
 Rewlid hymself be will and no resoun,
 Kepte his subiectis pleyntli, as I reede,
 Nat vnder loue but vnder froward dreede;
 Off olde wise, to his gret disauail,
 He despised the doctryn and counsail.

632 Even when he
 first came to
 the throne he
 despised the
 counsel of
 wise men

He demened, as it is weel kouth,
 His sceptre, his crowne and his regalie
 Be such folk as floured in her youth,
 Coude off custum ther wittis weel applie
 To bleende hym falsli with ther flat[e]rie,
 Which is a stepmooder callid in substaunce
 To al vertu and al* good gouernaunce.

640 and followed
 the advice of
 youthful flat-
 terers,

Alas, it is gret dool and gret pite,
 That flat[e]rie sholde haue so gret fauour,
 Which bleendith princis that they may nat see,
 Mistith the eyen off eueri gouernour,
 That thei can nat knowe her owne errour,
 Fals hony shad ay on ther sentence.
 A fool is he that yeueth to hem credence.

648 to whom only
 fools give
 credence;

Thei may be callid the deuelis taboureris,
 With froward sownys eris to fulfille;
 Or off Circes the pereilous boteleris,
 Which galle and hony [togedir] doun distille,
 Whos drynkes been bothe ameraus & ille,
 And, as clerkis weel deuise cunne,
 Wers than the drynkes off Cirenes tunne.

652 for such may
 be called the
 devil's tam-
 bourers,
 who din evil
 into men's
 ears:

Eris off pryncis ful weel thei can enoynte [p. 97]
 With the soffte oile off adulacioun,
 And ther termys most subtili appoynte,
 Ech thyng concludyng with fals decepcioun,
 Ay blandisshyng with ameraus poisoun;

660 subtle of
 speech, and
 always ending
 with
 deception,

640. her] *om.* H. 644. 2nd al] to al B, H, R 3, H 5.

652. tabourners H, taberoures R 3, tabourers P.

654. butlers P. 655. togedir] *om.* J.

659. Anoynte H.

- And fynali, as the poete seith,
Ther feith off custum concludith with onfeith. 664
- they flower in
words without
fruit and are
empty of
truth,
Flourying in woordis, thouh ther be no frut,
Double off herte, plesaunt off language,
Off trewe menyng void and destitut, 668
In mustryng outward pretende a fair visage:
Who trusteth hem fyndeth * smal auantage,
Be apparence & glorious fressh shewyng
Pryncis deceuyng & many a worthi kyng. 672
- as Rehoboam
can well bear
witness.
Roboam * can bere ful weel wnesse,
From hym auoidyng folkis that were trewe,
How he was hyndred be flatrie & falsnesse
Be hem that coude forge out talis newe; 676
Whos counseil afftir sore dede hym rewe,
And with ther feyned fals suggestioun
Gretli abreggid his dominacioun.
- Of fooly youth
and presump-
tion he believed
himself wiser
than his father,
He dempte hymself off more auctorite, 680
Off foli youthe and off presumpcioun,
Than was his fader in al his * rialte.
And this pompous fals opynyoun
Cam into his conceit bi adulacioun; 684
For flatereris bar to hym wnesse,
How he excellid his fadres hih noblesse.
- and oppressed
his subjects.
And when they
begged for
relief from
their tributes,
He dede gret rigour and oppreßioun
Vpon his peeple, as it was weel preued; 688
And thei to fynde sum mytigacioun
In materis which that han hem greued,
Off ther tributis for to be releued,
Besouhte he wolde recele hem in ther neede: 692
But al for nouht; he took theroff non heede.
- he set aside
all good coun-
sel and paid
no attention to
them.
Al old counsail from hym he sette a-side
And refusid ther doctryn and ther lore;
And be fals counsail off folkis ful off pride, 696
His poore liges he oppressid sore.
And ten kynredis anon, withoute more,
For tyrannye and for mysgouernaunce
From hym withdrouh ther trouthe & legeaunce. 700

670. fyndeth] fynt B, J, H.

673. Roboam] Roboan B, J (Roboam H, R 3, H 5, P).

682. al his] his gret B, gret J. 684. into] to H.

686. fadres hih noblesse] fadir in fairnesse H. 690. have H.

694. he] to H, R 3.

Thus off the kyng conceyued the rigour,
 The peeple anon off indignacioun
 Stooned Adoram, which was collectour
 Off the tributis in al his regeoun;
 From hym departyng bi rebellioun.
 Wheroff astonyd, tauenge his gret onriht,
 Into Iherusalem took anon his fliht.

So ten tribes
 arose, stoned a
 tax collector
 named Adoram
 and renounced
 their
 allegiance.
 704

And whan thei were partid from Roboam,
 The ten kynredis be dyuysiou
 Ches hem a kyng callid Ieroboam.
 And Roboam, withynne his roial toun,
 To been auengid on ther rebellioun
 And for to doon on hem cruel iustise,
 An hundred thousand he made anon tarise.

708 Rehoboam fled
 to Jerusalem.
 The ten tribes
 chose
 Jeroboam
 king.

With Ieroboam he caste hym for to meete,
 And al attonys sette in iupartie;
 But Semeias* the prophete bad hym lete,
 And from the werre withdrawn his partie.
 And mor the quarel for to iustefie,
 Off his peeplis froward departyng,
 It was Godis will doon for a pun[y]shyng.

716 Rehoboam
 raised an army
 of 100,000,
 but Shemaiah
 advised him
 to withdraw.

Touchyng the surplus off his gouernaunce,
 His roial beeldyng off many fair cite,
 His grete riche famous suffisaunce,
 Off wyn and oile hauyng gret plente,
 And how his empire encrecid yeres thre,
 Eek how that tyme he rihtful was in deede,
 In Iosephus his story ye may reede.

724 For the rest,
 his story is
 told in
 Iosephus.

Off his childre born in the riht[e] lyne,
 Eihtene wyues, as maad is menciou
 I fynde he hadde, and many concubyne,
 Sonys and douhtris be procreacioun;
 And how his richesse and gret pocessioun
 That tyme encreced, as it is weel knowe,
 To God a-boue whil that he bar hym lowe.

728 He had
 eighteen
 wives and
 many concu-
 bines and a
 profusion
 of children,
 732

But, as this auctour maketh rehersaile,
 In his ences and augmentacioun,
 Meeknesse off herte in hym gan waste & faile,

736 but lost his
 meekness of
 heart and be-
 came vicious;

706. gret] herte H. 707. took anon] he tooke H.
 708. departid H. 714. to rise H.
 717. Semeias] Rameus B, H, J, R 3 H 5.
 737. Aumentacioun H. 738. waste &] om. H.

- And pride entrid with fals presumpcioun,
 Vertu dispisyng and al relegeoun; 740
 Affter whos vices, as seith the same book,
 Wikkid exaample off hym the peeple took.
- and the people, as always happens, followed his bad example. Affter the maneres, wher thei be good or ille, [p. 98]
 Vsid off pryncis in dyuers regeouns, 744
 The peeple is redy to vsen and fulfille
 Fulli the traces off ther condiciouns:
 For lordis may in ther subiecciouns,
 So as hem list, who-so can taken heede, 748
 To vice or vertu ther subiectis leede.
- So he was chastised by God, Thus Roboam for his transgressiouns,
 In Iosephus as it is deuised,
 And for his froward fals opynyouns, 752
 Onli for he al vertu hath despised,
 Off God he was rihtfully chastised:
 In Ierusalem his cheeff roial toun
 Off his enmyes besegid enviroun. 756
- besieged in his capital by the king of Egypt, The kyng off Egypt a sege aboute hym laide
 With so gret peeple, that socour was ther non,
 Al-be-it so that Roboam abraide
 And preied God delyuere hym from his fon, 760
 Tauoide off merci his enmies euerichon.
 But God list nat to granten his praiere,
 But hym chastised, lik as ye shal heere.
- and finally losing it to him together with all the treasure of the temple. First his cite and his noble toun 764
 Delyuered was, he knew no bet socour,
 Vnder a feyned fals composicioun;
 For at ther entryng, void off al fauour,
 Kepyng no couenant, took al the tresour, 768
 Withynne the temple hauyng no pite,
 But ladde it hom to Egypt ther contre.
- Rehoboam was proud and a fool, and I'll let him live and die in his folly. And to reherse, it is a gret[e] dool,
 How Roboam, as Iosephus doth declare, 772
 Was inli proud and therwithal a fool,
 And off al wisdam destitut and bare,
 Onmerciabie his peeple for to spare,
 Hatyng good counsail, and so in his folie 776
 Regnyng a fool; and so I lete hym deie.

750. R begins again here. 758. With] And R.

761. Tauoide] Avoide R.

766. fals] om. R. 770. it] hym R — ther] that R.

771. a grete] to gret a H, R 3, so gret a H 5.

[Lenvoye.]

PHILISOPHRES concluden and deuise

In ther bookis off old* experience,
That counseilour[e]s sad, expert & wise,
Trewe off ther woord, stable off ther sentence,
Hasti nor rakel for no violence,
Keepe & preserue, the trouthe I dar attame,
Noblesse off pryncis fro myscheeff & diffame.

780
Wise counsellors
preserve princes
from mischief,

Hasty* youthe and rancour in contrari wise,
Which han to will[e] al ther aduertence,
Except hemsilff all othir men despise
Thoruh ther onbridled furious insolence,
Nothyng aqueyntid with wisdam nor prudence,
Brynge ageynward, wheroff thei be to blame,
Noblesse of princis* in myscheeff & diffame.

784
but hasty
youth and ran-
cour bring them
to destruction.

Kyng Roboam, ageyn riht and iustise,
To yonge foolis gaff feith & most credence,
Crueli his subiectis to chastise;
Which put his peeple from his benyuolence,
Drouh* ten kynredis from his obedience,
Which was to hym, be record, ful gret shame,
Puttyng his noblesse in myscheeff & diffame.

792 King Reho-
boam, advised
by young fools,
treated his
subjects badly
and drove
them to re-
bellion.

Noble Pryncis, doth wisli aduertise,
In preseruynge* off your* magnyficence,
Off olde expert nat blent with couetise
Taketh your counseil and doth hem reuerence,
Eyed as Argus in ther hih prouidence,
Which conserue be report off good name
Noblesse off pryncis from myscheeff & diffame.

796
800 Noble Princes,
take your
counsel of
old and expert
advisers, who
are not blinded
by covetous-
ness.

[A Chapitle/ descryuyng how prynces beyng hedis of
ther comountees sholde haue noble cheualrie true
Iuges &c^a ther commounte to gouerne &c^a.]¹

WHAT ertheli thyng is mor deceyuable,
Than off pryncis the pompe & veynglorie,*

804
What is more
deceptive than
the pomp and
vain glory of
princes?

779. old] good B. 782. nor] ne R. 785. Hasty] Haste B, J, R 3.
786. have H. 787. all] & H. 789. nor] & H. 790. Brynge] benyngne H.
791. Noblesse of princis] Puttyng his noblesse B, P, J, H 5,
Puttyng ther noblesse H, Puttyng her noblesse R 3.
796. Drouh] Thoruh B, through P, Thruh R 3, H 5.
800. preseruynge] perseueryng B. 801. expert] expertis R.
802. Take P. 803. as] of H — hih] om. H, R 3.
807, 9, 10. veyngloire, victoire, memoire B.

¹ MS. J. leaf 41 recto.

- Suddenly they disappear, their fame clouded with a dark shadow of oblivion. Which weene [to] stonde in ther estatys stable, 808
 As thei the world hadde conquered be victorie —
 And sodenli be put out off memorie,
 Ther fame cloudid, allas, and ther noblesse
 With a dirk shadwe off foryetilnesse! 812
- Where would be the glory of emperours were it not for scholars who write ther histories? Wheroff kom[e]th the famous cleer shynyng
 Off emperoures in ther consistories? —
 Or wheroff komth ther laude in reportyng,
 Sauff that clerkis han wreten ther histories? 816
 Or where were now conquestis transitories,
 Or ther tryumphes — wher sholde men hem fynde,
 Ne had* writeris ther prowesse put in mynde?
- Even the fame of the Nine Worthies rested on the labour of the people. Rekne up all, and first the worthy nyne, 820
 In hih noblesse which hadde neuer peeris:
 Ther marcial actis, which cleerli dede shyne,
 Ther fame vpborn aboue the* nyne speeris
 With loude sownys off Famys clariouneris, 824
 Ther glorious palmes, yiff thei be weel peised,*
 Be low labour off comouns was first reised.
- As a statue cannot stand without feet and legs, no prince may prosper without subjects. Mak a liknesse off thes gret ymages [p. 99]
 Coriousli corue out be entaile, — 828
 Hed, armys, bodi, and ther fressh visages,
 Withoute feet or leggis may nat vaile
 To stonde vpriht; for needis thei mut faile.
 And semblabli subiectis in comountees 832
 Reise up the noblesse off pryncis in ther sees.
- The head is set highest, as we know. As hed and membres in ymages been o ston,
 Outher o stok, be cumpas ondeuyded,
 And be proporcioun ther feturis euerichon 836
 Set in trewe ordre, as Nature hath provided,
 So that all errors thoruh crafft be circumcided:
 The hed set hiest be custom, as men knowe,
 The bodi amynd, the feet benethe lowe. 840

808. to] *om.* J, H 5, bei R 3 — ay in per statys R.

812. forgetfulness R.

819. Ne had] Nadde B.

823. the] all the B, J.

825. peised] preised B.

826. vpreisid H.

827. thes] the H. 830. avale R.

834. o] of R, H.

835. o] of R, H, R 3, P.

838. thoruh] bi R, H, by R 3 — circumcided] circumcised R, circumscised R 3.

840. amynd] in myddis R.

Mihti pryncis for ther hih renoun,
 As most worthi shal occupie the hed,
 With wit, memorie* and eyen off resoun
 To keepe ther membris fro myscheeff & dreed,
 Lik ther degrees take off hem good heed,
 With cleer[e] forsiht off a prudent thouht
 Ther feet preserue that thei erre nouht.

and by its
 foresight must
 keep the other
 members from
 harm.

844

Ther mut been handis & armys off diffence,
 Which shal this ymage manli keepe & guie
 From alle assautis off foreyn violence,
 Which shal be named noblesse off cheualrie —
 Ther trewe office iustli to magnefie,
 Sustene the chirch & make hemsiluen strong
 To see that widwes nor maidnes ha[ue] no wrong.

848 There must also
 be hands and
 arms of defence,

852

Prudent iuges, as it is skele and riht,
 To punshe wrong and surfetis to redresse,
 In this ymage shal occupie the siht:
 For loue or hate, bi doom off rihtwisesse,
 For freend or fo his iugementis dresse,
 So egali the lawes to susteene,
 In ther werkis that noon errour be seene.

prudent judges,
 who are as
 856 eyes,

860

Mid this ymage there is a bodi set,
 An agregat off peeplis and degrees,
 Be parfit pes and vnyte I-knet
 Bi thestatis that gouerne comountees, —
 As meires, prouostes & burgeis in citees,
 Marchauntis also, which seeke sundri londis,
 With othir crafftis which lyuen bi ther hondis.

a torso made
 of officials,
 burgesses and
 merchants;

864

868

And as a bodi which that stant in helthe
 Feelith no greeff off no froward humours,
 So eueri comoun contynueth in gret welthe,
 Which is demened with prudent gouernours,
 That can appese debatis and errours,
 The peple keepe from al contrauersie,
 Causyng the[r] weelfare tencrece & multeplie.

and as a body
 in health
 knows no dis-
 comfort, so is a
 country rich
 when governed
 by prudent
 men who keep
 the people in
 peace.

872

842. hed] stede H.

843. memoire B. 844. ther] the R.

848. armys & hondis R, H.

853. hemsiluen] hem ful R.

854. nor] & R. 862. In myddis R.

864. I-knet] knett R.

866. Mayores P, mayrys H 5, Mairis H — prouestes R.

872. demened] demyd R. 874. to kepe R — countrouersye R.

- This body must also have a soul of contemplative folk, This bodi must haue a soule off liff 876
 To quyke the membris with gostli mocious, To quyke the membris with gostli mocious,
 Which shal be maad off folk contemplatiff, Which shal be maad off folk contemplatiff,
 The cherche committed to ther pocessiouns, The cherche committed to ther pocessiouns,
 Which bi ther hooli conuersaciouns 880
 And good example[s] sholde as sterris shyne, And good example[s] sholde as sterris shyne,
 Be grace and vertu the peeple [t]enlumyne. Be grace and vertu the peeple [t]enlumyne.
- to whose care the church is committed, and who should tell the truth to all men and reprove vices; Vpon the liht off ther condiciouns,
 Off this bodi dependith the weelfare; 884
 For in ther techyng and predicaciouns For in ther techyng and predicaciouns
 Thei sholde trouthe to hih & low declare, Thei sholde trouthe to hih & low declare,
 And in ther office for no dreed ne spare Vices correcte, lich as thei ar holde, 888
 Sithe thei been heerdis off Cristes folde. Sithe thei been heerdis off Cristes folde.
- and there must be labourers to hold up and sustain the body as feet and legs; for honest labour is wholly justified. Folwyng vpon, off entent ful cleene,
 Laboreris, as ye han herd deuised, 892
 Shal this bodi bern up and susteene Shal this bodi bern up and susteene
 As feet and leggis, which may nat be despised; As feet and leggis, which may nat be despised;
 For trewe labour is iustli auctorised, For trewe labour is iustli auctorised,
 And ner the plouh vpholden be trauaile, And ner the plouh vpholden be trauaile,
 Off kynges, pryncis farweel al gouernaile. 896
- Thus, if princes, knights, judges, burgesses, clerics and labourers do their duty, then it may be said that this image is well wrought. Thus first yiff pryncis gouerned been be riht,
 And knythod suffre the peeple to ha[ue] no wrong, And knythod suffre the peeple to ha[ue] no wrong,
 And trouthe in iuges shewe out his cleer liht, And trouthe in iuges shewe out his cleer liht,
 And feith in cites with loue be drawe a-long, 900
 And hooli cherche in vertu be maad strong, And hooli cherche in vertu be maad strong,
 And in his labour the plouh ne feyne nouht, — And in his labour the plouh ne feyne nouht, —
 Thanne be proporcioun this ymage is weel wrouht. Thanne be proporcioun this ymage is weel wrouht.
- With King Rehoboam as an example, princes must remember that God created people for the advantage of rulers, not to be oppressed. This mateer hool for texemplefie, 904
 Kyng Roboam for fals* oppressioun Kyng Roboam for fals* oppressioun
 And for his wilful froward tiranny And for his wilful froward tiranny
 Loste a gret parti off his regeoun; Loste a gret parti off his regeoun;
 Wherefore, let pryncis considren off resoun, 908
 God sette the peeple for lordis auauntage, God sette the peeple for lordis auauntage,
 And nat to been oppressid with seruage. And nat to been oppressid with seruage.

877. quykene R.

879. commyttith H.

881. sholde] holde R. 888. ar] er H.

889. owne folde R.

896. pryncis kyngis R, R 3 — al] the H.

898. to] om. R.

905. fals] a fals B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P — oppressioun] pre-
sumpcioun H.

Vpon summe pryncis Bochas doth compleyne, [p. 100] Bochas disap-
 Such as haue a custum and maneer 912 proves of
 Ageyn ther subiectis ongoodli to disdeyne, 912 princes who are
 And off pride to shewe hem froward cheer; disdaiful to
 Counseileth hem to remembre & ler, their subjects,
 As this chapitle doth fynali deuise, and counsels
 916 them to remem-
 First out off labour al lordshepe dede arise. ber that all
 lordship first
 arose out of
 labour.

[How Mucius Scevola slouh an Innocent in stede of
 Kyng Porcenna that leide siege to Rome.]¹

WHAN kyng Porcenna with his cheualrie
 Ageyn Romeyns a werre first began,
 The toun besegyng vpon ech partie
 With gret puissaunce brouht out off Tuskan,
 In the cite ther was a knyhtli man,
 Mucius Scevola, which caste in ther distresse
 To breke the siege thoruh his hih prowesse. 924
 Leet arme hymself[e] cleene in plate & maile,
 For comoun profit, tauauncen his corage
 Kyng Porcenna proudli to assaile;
 A tyme prouyded to his auountage, 928
 Thoruh the siege to maken his passage,
 And fynali at his in-comyng
 Iuparte his persone for to sle the kyng.
 But lik as tellith Titus Lyuyus,
 Wher Porcenna sat in his roial see,
 This senatour, this manli Mucius,
 Sauh a prynce off gret auctorite,
 The kyng rasemblyng, clad [both] in o lyuere, 936
 Atween discernyng no maner variaunce;
 Slouh that prynce off veray ignoraunce.
 But whan he knew[e] that he dede faile
 To slen Porcenna, enmy to the toun,
 And sauh he hadde lost al his trauaile,
 He made a pitous lamentacioun,
 Because he dede execucioun
 Off ignoraunce, ageyn his owne entent, 940
 To spare a tirant and slen an innocent. 944

When the
 Etruscans once
 besieged Rome,
 Mucius Sca-
 vola determined
 to pass through
 the hostile

lines and slay
 King Porcenna.

Unfortunately
 he mistook
 another prince
 for the king,
 and killed him,

But when he
 saw his blunder,
 he cried out in
 grief at having
 slain an inno-
 cent man

916. As] And H, R.

920. toun] ton H.

931. Iuparte] Iupardie R.

933. his] om. R.

935. Sauh] Sith R.

941. sauh] sith R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 41 verso.

and going up
to a fire, he
held his hand
in the flames
until it was
consumed.

For which he was with hymself ful wroth,
That he was founde so negligent in deede,
And with his hand onto a fir he goth, 948
Made it brenne briht as any gleede,
Bothe nerff & bon and his flessch to sheede,
His hand consumyng on pecis heer & yonder,
And from his arm made it parte assonder. 952

For this deed
the Romans
ever afterward
called him
Scævola,

And as the story declareth onto vs,
This manli man, this noble senatour,
Afor tyme was callid Mucius, 956
Which for the comoun dede many gret labour;
And for the ynkouth hasti fell rigour
Doon [vn]to hymself, the Romeyns all,
Sceula thei dede hym afftir call.

which is to
say, a man
without a hand.

As moche to seyne be language off that lond — 960
Who take ariht the exposicioun —
As a man which is withoute an hond.
And afftir hym bi successioun
Al his offspryg, that wer bor in the toun, 964
In remembraunce for tencrece his fame,
Off Sceula bar afftir hym the name.

Such examples
shew what
perils and suf-
fering men
have endured
for common ad-
vantage, as
once when
Brutus chased
Tarquin and all
kings from
Rome.

Be this exauple and many a-nother mo,
Yiff men list her corages to awake, 968
Thei sholde seen what pereil & what wo
For comoun profit men hauē* vndirtake,
As whilom Brutus for Lucrecis sake
Chaced Tarquyn for his transgressioun 972
And kynges alle out off Rome toun.

Lucrece's story
is related by
Chaucer, who

Touchyng Lucrece, exauple off wifli trouthe,
How yonge Tarquyn hir falsli dede oppresse,
And afftir that, which was to gret a routhe, 976
How she hirsilff[e] slouh for heuynesse,
It nedith nat rehersyn the processe,
Sithe that Chaucer, cheeff poete off Bretayne,
Wrot off hir liff a legende souerayne. 980

told why the
Romans exiled
their kings and
how Æneas de-
serted Dido,

Rehersyng ther among[es] other thynges
Ech circumstaunce and ech occasioun:
Whi Romeyns exilid first ther kynges,

948. And] An R. 950. and] om. R. 957. hasti] om. R.
958. vnto] to H, J, R 3, H 5, P. 959. afftir did hym R.
960. As meche to seye R. 968. Corage H.
970. haue] han B. 979. Sithe] Which R.

Neuer to regnen afftir in ther toun,
 As olde cronycles make mencion,
 Remembryng also thunkyndli gret outrage
 Bi Eneas* doon to Dido off Cartage.

984

Eek othir stories which he wrot his lyue
 Ful notabli with eueri circumstaunce,
 And ther fatis dede pitousli descryue,
 Lik as thei fill put hem in remembraunce,
 Wherfore yiff I sholde my penne auauce,
 Afftir his makyng to putte hem in memorie,*
 Men wolde deeme it presumpcioun & veynglorie.

988 as well as other
 tales, notably
 written. It
 were presump-
 tion for me to
 tell them again,

992

For as a sterre in presence off the sunne
 Lesith his fresshnesse and his cleer[e] liht,
 So my reudnesse vnder skies dunne
 Dareth ful lowe and hath lost his siht,
 To be compared ageyn the bemys briht
 Off this poete; wherfore it were but veyn
 Thyng seid be hym to write it newe ageyn.

[p. 101] for as a star
 pales before
 996 the sun, so
 my unpolished
 language can
 stand no com-
 parison to the
 bright beams of
 this poet.

1000

[How Lucrece/ oppressid bi Tarquin slouh hirsilf.] ¹

BUT at Lucrece stynte I will a while,
 It were pite hir story for to hide,
 Or slouthe the penne of my reud[e] stile,
 But for hir sake alle materis set a-side.
 Also my lord bad I sholde abide,
 By good auyis at leiser to translate
 The doolful processe off hir pitous fate.

Yet, after all, I
 will pause at
 Lucrece. It
 would be a
 1004 pity not to tell
 her story, and,
 besides, my
 lord bade me
 do it.

1008

Folwyng the traxis off Collucyus,
 Which wrot off hir a declamacioun
 Most lamentable, most doolful, most pitous,
 Wher he descryueth the dolerous tresoun
 Off hir constreyned fals oppressioun,
 Wrouht & compassid bi vnwar violence,
 The liht ontroubliid off hir cleer conscience.

So, following
 Collucius, I'll
 describe how
 she was taken
 unawares and
 outraged.

1012

986. Remembre R. 987. Eneas] encres B, encrece J,
 Encrece H, Encres H 5, encros R 3, Eneas R, Aeneas P.
 988. his] in his H. 991. fill] ful R. 992. Wheroff R.
 993, 94. memoire, veyngloire B.
 999. compared] compacid R. 1001. be hym] befor R.
 1003. for] om. H.
 1007. at] bi H. 1008. hir] his R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 42 recto.

- Her father was Spurius, her husband Collatine; Sextus Tarquin was the cause of her death. Her fader whilom callid Spurius,
1016 Hir worthi husbonde named Collatyn,
Which bi the luxure & tresoun odious
And vicious outrage of Sextus, proud Tarquin,
Oppressid was & brouht onto hir fyn. 1020
Whos dedli sorwe in Inglissh for to make,
Off pitous routhe my penne I feelee quake.
- Tarquin came upon her like a thief in the night with a naked sword in his hand, This said Tarquyn, this euel auised knyht,
1024 This sclaunderid man, most hatful for his deede,
Cam lich a theeff, alas, vpon a nyht
With naked suerd, whan no man took non heede,
Vpon Lucrece, she quakyng in hir dreede,
Liggyng abedde ferr from hir folkes all, 1028
And knew no refuge for helpe for to call.
- and said that if she would not yield to him, he would find means to destroy her good name forever. He manacyng in his froward entent,
On hir beholdyng with a furious cheer,
That with his suerd[e], but she wolde assent, 1032
Hire and a boy he wolde prente ifeer,
Such on as was most ougli off maner,
Most onlikli off persone and off fame:
Thus he hir thratte for to sclauandre hir name. 1036
- So there was no help for it. Next morning she told her husband all, and, requesting him to do vengeance, said But his entent[e] whan she dede feelee,
And sauh no mene ageyn hir woful chaunce,
The morwen afftir she list nothyng concele,
Tolde hir husbonde hooli the gouernaunce, 1040
Hym requeryng for to do vengauunce
Vpon this crym, saide lik a trewe wiff,
She wolde hir herte percen with a knyff.
- that she would take her own life, as the lesser evil. In this mater this was hir fantasie: 1044
Bet was to deie than to lyue in shame,
And lasse wikke, to putte in iupartie
Hir mortal bodi than hir good[e] fame.
Whan honour deieth, farweel a manys name! 1048
Bet it were out off this liff disseuere,
Than sclaundrous fame to slen a man for euere.

1017. Cellatyne R.

1018. luxurie R, P, luxury H, R 3.

1033. prente] present R, R 3.

1039. morwen] morowe R, morow R 3, P, morn H, J, morwyn H 5.

1042. this] his H.

1045. Bettir R. 1046. wikke] wikkid was R.

1049. Bettir R.

But to that purpos hir husbonde seide nay,
 Hir fader also was therto contrarie,*
 Making a promys, withoute mor delay,
 To do vengeance how thei wil nat tarie.
 To hir declaryng with resouns debonarie,
 Vnder these woordis trouthe & riht conserued,
 To slen hirsilff she hath nothyng disserued:

1052 But Collatine
 and her father
 said no, prom-
 ising to do
 vengeance at
 once.

["My dere Lucrece, tempeste the nat at al,
 We knowe thy menyng and thy clene entent,
 Thy vertu prevyd in especial,
 Which yevith to vs a ful pleyn argument,
 Vn-to thavoutour thou gaff nevir* assent,
 And for a more singuleer evydence,
 Cryest euere to punysse his greet offence.

1060 "My dear
 Lucrece, do not
 be troubled, we
 know your
 virtue.

Lyst nat cese, but euere theron abydest,
 And al counfort doost fro thy-sylff refuse;
 Thyng that was secre, in covert thou nat hydest,
 But rygerously thavoutour doost accuse,
 Wheer expert vertu thy renoun doth* excuse.
 Thy wyffly trouthe can bern also witnesse
 By cleer repoort to vs of thy clenness.

1064 "You cry out
 on this offence
 without com-
 fort, you conceal
 nothing from
 us, you have
 always been a
 model of wifely

For in the eyen of folkys ferre and neer,
 The glorye and honour of wyffly chasteite
 Hath to this day with bryghte beemys cleer
 In thy persone enlvmyned this cyte.
 For bothe in opyn and also in secre
 The fame hath flouryd of thy chaast[e] name,
 Fre fro thatwytyng of ony spot of blame.

1072 propriety, we
 know ourselves
 that you are a

We can our-sylff recordyn and expresse,
 How thy delyght and thyn hertly plesaunce
 Was to worshepe wyffly sobirnesse,
 And to werreye al chaunge and varyaunce,
 Lyk a lanterne set vp of constaunce,
 Or lyk a merour, in euery mannys syght,
 Off good exauple to yive al othir lyght.

1080 lantern, a
 mirror of con-
 stancy.

1052, 54, 55. contraire, taire, debonaire B.

1055. resoun H. 1056. these] ther H.

1058. The following six stanzas are omitted in B, H, J, H 5, P.

The text is supplied from Harley 1766, fol. 102 recto.

1058. the] om. R.

1062. nevir] nevir thyn Harley 1766.

1069. doth] doost Harley 1766.

1077. hath] om. R.

1078. thatwytyng] the awaytyng R.

"Don't you
remember how
Tarquin and I
found you not
long ago vir-
tuously occupied
amidst your
maidens,

My trewe Lucrece, hastow nat in mynde,
Nat yooore agoon, in verray sekirnesse,
How thavoutour and I the did[e] fynde
Amyd thy women in vertuous besynesse
Occupyed, — a tokne of stedfastnesse,
Therby concludyng of trouthe and of resoun,
Modir of vertu is occupacyoun.

1088

1092

making them
embroider in
soft woolls,
without thought
of evil?

I fond the thanne, as I haue do ful offte,
Among thy maydenys besily sitting,
To make hem werke vpon wollys soffte,
In ther werkyng hem womanly cherysshynge.
On vicious lust ful smal was thy thynkyng;
Wherefore, thow shuldyst of resoun advertyse,
Tatempre thy dool in more tendir wyse:]

1096

"You were
trapped like a
fowl in a snare,
and you think
your good name
is lost.

For sodenli and also onauised,
As a foul is trappid in a snare,
Be onwar fraude vpon the practised,
Thou were deceyued, pleyntly to declare,
Hauyng this conceit, hard is to repare
The name off hem which falsli be diffamed,
Whan wrong report the[r] hih renoun hath shamed.

1100

1104

"But this is
impossible.

Touchyng thi persone, I dar afferme & seyn,
That it were a maner impossible,
And lik a thyng which neuer yit was seyn,
That thi worshepe was founde corruptible,
But stedfast ay and indyuysible,
Ondepartid in vertu and maad strong,
And now desirous tauenge thi pitous wrong.

1108

1112

"We will be
avenged on
your wrong.

On thyn iniurie we shal auengid be,
Considred first the dedli heynesse
Which thou suffredist bi gret aduersite,
Whan thauoutour thi* beute dede oppresse,
And reioishyng bi a fals gladnesse,
Maugre thi will[e], as a theeff be nyht
The encoumbred off veray force & myht.

1116

1120

1091. 2nd of] *om.* R.

1092. of] and Harley 1766.

1096. hem womanly] womanly hem R.

1100. also] al H. 1104. is] it is R.

1106. ther] the J, H, R 3, H 5, P.

1113. now] not H.

1114. shal] shullen R.

1117. thi] thei B.

- But yiff thou woldist leue al thi moornyng [p. 102] "Only restrain
 And restreyne thyn inportable wo, your sorrow
 Thou sholdist seen so egal a punshyng and you will
 Vpon thi moste froward mortal fo, see exemplary
 To warne alle othre, thei shal no mor do so, punishment
 In chastisyng off fals auoutrie, dealt to your
 The and thi renoun off riht to magnesie. enemy, as a
 warning to all
 others.
 What was diffacyng to thi trewe entent, 1124
 Thouh his youthe onbridled wente at large, "His unbridled
 So for tafforce a celi innocent? youth did not
 Whos wikkednesse ouhte to bere the charge, prejudice your
 And we off riht thi conscience discharge. honesty;
 The ioie onleefful off his fals plesaunce, 1132
 With double palme thyn honour doth auance. reason and dis-
 Conceyue and see, o thou my Lucrece, cretion both
 How that resoun and good discrecioun demand that
 Sholde thi trouble & thi mournyng cese, you should not
 Off riht restreyne thyn opynyoun, sacrifice your
 So reklesli to do punycioun, life for an-
 other's gilt.
 With knyf on honde to slen thisilff, alas! 1140
 For othres gilt, and dedist no trespass. "Lay aside
 Lat be, Lucrece, lat been al thi dool, your sorrow,
 Cese thi compleynt & thi wo restreyne. Lucrece, and do
 Sholde I fro the lyue alone al sool, not be so reck-
 And thi deth perpetueli compleyne? less of our
 To putte thi fader in inportable peyne, — welfare!
 Off our weelfare be nat so rek[el]les, 1144
 To deie and leue our childre moodirles. 1148
 Off prudence eek thou ouhtest for to see "Your soul is
 And aduertise onli off resoun, free from all
 Thouh off force thi bodi corrupt be, corruption;
 Thi soule inward and thyn entencioun 1152
 Fraunchised been from al corrupcioun. "it is not sur-
 Offens is noon, considre in thyn entent, prising that a
 But will and herte yiue therto ful consent. weak woman
 Thou were nakid in thi bed liggyng, should be over-
 Alone, onwar, slepyng and void off myht, come by a
 Suspeciounles al off his comyng, strong man.

1122. Importable H.

1131. ouhte to] of riht ouht R. 1132. off riht] also R.

1133. fals] hertly R. 1140. on] in R.

1142. thi] this R. 1144. al] and R. 1146. importable H.

1151. corruptid H. 1158. al] as H, H 5, R 3—Suspiciousles P.

- That tyme namli, because that it was nyht.
A feerful woman, and he an hardi knyht, 1160
Al-be-it so onknyhtli was his deede,
With nakid suerd tassaile thi womanheede.
He myhte thi bodi be force weel oppresse
Be sleiht weies that he hadde souht; 1164
But weel wot I, for al his sturdynesse,
He myhte neuer ha[ue] maistri off thi thouht.
The bodi yolde, the herte yald hym nouht.
Ye wer[en] tweyne, thou feeble & he riht strong, 1168
Thi trouthe afforced, he werkere off the wrong.
Where myhtistou ha[ue] grettere price or laude,
Al riht considred, trouthe and equite:
First countirpeised his force & sleiht fraude, 1172
Thanne to perseuere in femynyte
With thouht onchaungid, & in fragilite
Off womanheed to haue an herte stable, —
What thyng in the myht be mor comendable? 1176
It is weel knowe thou were off herte ay oon,
To all fals lustis contraire in gouernaunce,
Mor lik an ymage korue out off a ston,
Than lik a woman flesshli off plesaunce 1180
The tirant fond the in cheer & contenaunce,
Which euer afftir be womanli victorie*
Shal be ascryued to thyn encres off glorie.
Thi fadir Brutus hath the weel excusid, 1184
Misilff also, thi blood & thi kynreede, —
On this mater lat no mor be musid.
To sle thisilff or do thi sidis bleede,
Certis, Lucrece, thou hast ful litil neede; 1188
It were gret wrong be al our iugement
To spare a tirant and slen an innocent.
Thi-silff to moordre, to summe it wolde seeme
Thou were gilty, wher-as thou art cleene. 1192
Dyuers wittis dyuersli wolde* deeme,
Reporte thyng thou neuer* dedist meene.
For which thou shalt pacientli susteene,
1160. feerdful R. 1164. out souht R.
1165. sturdynesse] worthynesse H.
1169. Thi] The R — he] of R.
1174. &] om. R — fragillige R. 1182, 83. victoire, gloire B.
1186. thi] thi H — mor] man H.
1193. wolde] will B, R 3, wil J, P, wyl H 5.
1194. And reporte R — thou neuer] that thou neuer R —
neuer] non B, J, none P (which thou noon did meen R 3).

"Yet I know
that for all his
strength he
never could
compel your
heart to yield.

"What is more
praiseworthy
than the con-
trast between
his fraud and
your constancy?

"We know well
that the tyrant
found you more
like an image
of stone than a
being of flesh
and blood.

"Your father
and I have
both excused
you, so do not
think of killing
yourself.

"If you do, it
will seem to
some that you
werp guilty;

Till thi chast[e] wiffli innocence
Māy seen hym punished for his violence.

1196

Folk wil nat deeme a persone innocent,
Which wilfulli, whan he is nat coupable,
Yildith hymself to deth be iugement,
And neuer afforn was off no gilt partable.
His owne doom, vpon hymself vengable,
Caueth the peeple, thoh ther report be nouht,
To deeme a thyng that neuer was doon nor thouht. 1204

for folk will not
hold a person
innocent who
wilfully yields
himself to
death;

To been auengid vpon thyn owne liff, [p. 103]
In excusyng off thi dedli diffame,
To shewe thou art a trewe parfit wiff,
Wenyng be deth to gete the a name, —
In this deuyd thou art gretli to blame,
Wher thou yit knowest thyn honour cleerli shyne,
To yiue the peeple mater to deuyne.” 1208

and if you did
this you would
be greatly to
blame.”

¶ And with that woord Lucrece dede abraide,
Ful dedli pale bothe off look and cheer,
To them ageyn, euene thus she saide:
“Lat be, husbonde, lat be, my fader deer,
Spekith no mor to me off this mateer,
List men dempte, in hyndryng off my name,
I dradde deth mor than fals diffame. 1212

With that word
Lucrece an-
swered, “Let be,
my husband
and my father.

Your counsail is, I shal my liff conserue
To sorwe and slaundre, but to no gladnesse;
But lasse wikke is at an hour to sterue
Than euer langwisshe in sorwe & heuynesse.
Deth maketh an eende off al worldli distresse;
And it was said sithe[n] ful yore ago,
Bet is to deie than euer to lyue in wo. 1216

“Your counsel
is that I shall
live in sorrow;
but it is less
wrong to die
than ever to
languish in woe.

Whan that worshepe in any creature
Is slayn and ded be slaund[e]rous report,
Bet is off deth the dreedful payne endure,
Than be fals noise ay luyne in discomfort,
Wher newe & newe diffame hath his resort, 1224

“When honour
is slain, it is
better to endure
death.

1204. nor] no R.

1218. deth mor] more deth R. 1219. my liff I shal H.

1221. wikkyd R.

1224. said] om. R — sithen] sithe J, P, sythen H 5 — yore]

longe R 3, yeere H 5.

1225, 28. Bettir R.

1229. discomfort H.

1230. diffame] fame R, H.

Neuer deieth, but quekith be thoutrage
Off hatful tungenes & venymous language. 1232

"Do your best
to protect
wisely chastity
by taking ven-
geance on the
adulterer.

Doth your deuer to halwe & make stable
The chast[e] chaumbres off wifli gouernaunce;
For in this cas yiff ye be variable
On fals auoutri for to do vengauce, 1236
Ther shal folwe euerlastyng remembraunce,
How trewe spousaile, as ye han herd deuysed,
In your cite was broke and nat chastised.

"If you are
found negligent,
licentiousness/
will run un-
bridled at large.

Yiff ye be founde in such cas necligent 1240
To punyssh e auoutours, off riht as is your charge,
Thoruh your slouthe, as ye were off assent,
Luxure onbridled shal renne abrod at large.
Who shal thanne your conscience discharge, 1244
Or what woman stonde in sekirnesse,
Off Lucrece afforded the clenness?

"What joy
would you
have, dear hus-
band, in loving
me after Tar-
quin's horrid
crime?

O deere husbonde, what ioie sholde it be
To thyn estat, in ony maner place, 1248
Lich as thi wiff [for] to cherisshe me,
Or in thyn armys me goodli to enbrace,
The gilt horrible considred and trespase
Be Tarquyn doon — alas and welaway! — 1252
Which in my persone may neuer be wasshe away?

"And, my
father, how can
you call me
daughter after
this day?

And fader myn, how sholdestou me calle,
Afftir this day, thyn owne douhter deere,
Which am, alas, refus off women alle, 1256
That to thi plesaunce was whilom most enteere,
Withynne thi hous whan I dede lere,
Bi cleer exaample off manyfold doctryne,
Al that partened to vertuous disciplyne? 1260

"Having lost
my virtue, I
dare not even
behold my own
children!

Which I haue lost now in my daies olde,
Dispeired it to recure ageyn.
Myn owne childre, I dar hem nat beholde,
Because the wombe in which that thei ha[ue] leyn 1264
Diffouled is and pollut in certeyn,
Which was toforn in chastite conserued.
Chastisith thauoutour, as he hath disserued!

1241. avoutrers R.

1243. Luxury H, R 3, Luxurie P — renne abrod] goone aboute
R, ryn about R 3.

1245. schall stonde R. 1249. for] om. J.

1258. thi] thyne R, thyn H, R 3, H 5. 1262. Dispeired R.

1264. the] that the R — haue] om. R. 1265. pollutid H.

And for my part to speke in woordes fewe,
 Lenger to lyue I ha[ue] no fantasie;
 For wher sholde I out my face shewe,
 Or dore appeere in any cumpanye,
 Sithe a dirk spotte off fals auoutrie
 Shal euer encrece*, wher it be fals or trewe,
 Into myn hyndryng the sclaunder to renewe?

1268 "Nor have I
 the desire to
 live longer:
 defouled, I dare
 not appear in
 any company.

1272

Lust afforcid hath a fals appetit,
 Of freelte includid* in Nature;
 Maugre the will, ther folweth a delit,
 As summe folk seyn, in eueri creature.
 Good fame lost, ful hard is to recure;
 And sithe I may myn harmys nat redresse,
 To you in open my gilt I will confesse.

1276 "Lust afforcid
 has a false ap-
 petite, delight
 follows, even
 though it be
 against the
 will;

1280

Al-be I was ageyn my will oppressid,
 Ther was a maner constreyned lust in deede,
 Which for noun power myht nat be redressid,
 For febilnesse I stood in so gret dreede.
 For which offence deth shal be my meede,
 Sith leuer I haue with sum egge tool
 To sle mysilff, than lyue in sclaunder & dool.

1284 and as such
 was my experi-
 ence, I would
 rather kill my-
 self with some
 edged weapon
 than live in
 disgrace.

1288

O fader myn, spare and ha[ue] pite!
 And deere husbonde, rewe on myn offence!
 Goddis & goddessis callid off chastite,
 To my trespase graunteth an indulgence;
 For off my gilt to make a recompence,
 Wher that Venus gat in me auauntage,
 Deth shal redresse & chastise myn outrage.

[p. 104] "The gods and
 goddesses of
 chastity grant
 this indulgence,
 that death may
 redress my
 1292 wrong-doing.

For yiff I sholde make a delay
 To perce my brest bi sharpnesse off a knyff,
 Men wolde deeme and sey fro day to day,
 To make my sclaunder mor open & mor ryff,
 How that I was mor tendir off my lyff
 Than off my worshep, which wer to gret a shame, —
 To loue my liff mor than my good[e] name!

1296 "If I delay,
 men will think
 that I loved
 life more than
 my good name.

1300

1270. out my face] my face out R.
 1273. euer encrece] euermore B, euermore J — wher] whedir H.
 1274. renewe] remewe H.
 1276. includid] includyng R, concludid hoolly H, encludid
 hoolly R 3, the word includid is repeated in B, J, H 5.
 1281. my gilt in open R. 1282. Al-be] Also R.
 1283. Ther] the H. 1284. noun] no R.
 1287. Sith] And R. 1290. deere] trew H.
 1291. callid] om. R. 1297. a] om. H.

"No witness is
so good as
blood shed with
a knife.

In this mateer no wittenesse is so good,
To putte a-way al fals suspeciouⁿ,
As with a knyff to sheede myn herte blood:
I myht nat make a bet purgacioun
To alle folk that ha[ue] discreciounⁿ,
Than fynali be my deth texcuse
The gilt horrible, off which men me accuse.

1304

1308

"Go forth, my
soul, before the
judges infernal,
who will decide
that my con-
science was
pure;

Go foorth my soule, peur & inmortal,
Cheeff[e] wittenesse off myn innocence,
Tofor tho iuges which be infernal:
First Mynos, kyng, to deeme my conscience,
With Radamanthus to yeuen a-sentence
Lik my desert, that it may be seene,
In wifli trouthe how that I was cleene.

1312

1316

and let my
blood stir and
excite the
people to exile
all kings for
Tarquin's sake.

Thou ertheli body, which thoruh thi fairnesse
Were to auoutri ful gret occasioun,
Off thi blood sheede out the red[e]nesse,
And be thi sides late it raile down;
Stere and excite the peeple off this toun
To doon ther deuer, withynne a litil while,
For loue off Tarquyn, alle kynges to exile.

1320

"Do not delay
your ven-
geance."

And first I praie, myn husbonde most enteere,
Off this vengauⁿce to make no delay;
With helpe & socour off my fader deere
To punyssh^e thauoutour, in al the haste ye may;
Let hym take his wages and his pay,
Lik as ye seen, and pleyⁿli now conceyue,
For his offence the deth I do receyue."

1324

1328

And suddenly,
before they
knew what she
was doing, she
took a knife and
pierced her
heart and
fell down dead
at their feet.

And sodenli, or thei myhte aduerte,
She took a knyff, and with gret violence,
Thoruh the brest, euene onto the herte
She made it glide, — ther was no resistance.
Ful pale and ded fill down in ther presence.
And bi occasioun* off this pitous deede,
Tarquyn exilid, and hooli his kenreede.

1332

1336

1306. myht] may R — bet] bettir R.

1308. Than] & H — texcuse] excuse R.

1309. accuse] excuse R.

1310. peur] pore R — &] & and R — Immortall H.

1312. tho] the R, H, R 3. 1319. thi] the H.

1326. &] om. R.

1328. pay] play R, pray H.

1330. do] now R.

1336. bi occasioun] bocasioun B, bi the occasion R.

For which[e] cause, be record off writyng,
 Was ther neuer in Rome the cite,
 Afftir that day no man crownyd kyng,
 As in cronycles ye may beholde and see.
 Thus for luxur[y]e and ther cruelte,
 Ther tyrannye and fals extorsioun,
 Thei wer exilid out off Rome toun.

1340

For this reason
 there was never
 after a king in
 Rome.

1344

[How Rome afftir was gouerned and virginea bi hir
 fadir slayn.] ¹

GOUERNED afftir bi other officeres,
 As is remembred in Titus Lyuyus,
 Callid decemvir of dyuers cronycleres;
 Among[es] which ther was on Appius,
 A iuge ontrewre, proud and luxurious,
 Which thoruh the cite, the story berth witesse,
 Behatid was for his gret falsnesse.

1348

Rome was
 afterwards
 governed by
 decemvirs,
 among whom
 was Appius,
 hated for his
 dishonesty.

And onys it fill, as he caste his look
 Vpon a maide most inli fair off siht,
 A fals desir withynne his herte he took
 Hir to disuse, ageyn al skele and riht.
 And she was douhter to a worthi knyht,
 Ful manli founde in his deedis all,
 And Virginius the Romeyns dede hym call.

1352

He once saw a
 young girl,
 daughter of
 Virginius, of
 whom he
 wished to have
 possession.

1356

Whos goodli douhter, the story doth us lere,
 Was afftir hym for his noble fame
 Virginia callid, most goodli & enteere;
 And for this cause she bar the same name.
 But Appius ful gretli was to blame,
 Which hath conspired thoruh his gret falsnesse,
 Yiff that he myhte hir beute to oppresse.

1360

Her name was
 Virginia.

This iuge ontrewre bothe in thouht and deede,
 Off lawe onrihtful souhte out occasioun;
 Made a sergeat off his to proceede,
 Ageyn this maide to take an accioun,
 Cleymed hir his seruaut bi fals collusioun.
 And this was doon be Appius off entent
 That he on hir myht yiue a iugement.

1364

1368

This dishonest
 judge caused a
 sergeant-at-law
 to proceed
 against her on a
 false charge,

1372

1346. in] bi H, by R 3.

1366. and] in R. 1368. to] go R.

1369. maide] mateer R. 1370. Cleymed] Cleym H.

1372. on] of H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 43 verso.

so that he
might find op-
portunity to
accomplish his
desire.

And be this mene, in his fals delit,
Thouhte he myhte hir beute best disuse,
So for taccomplisshe his flesschli appetit,
She beyng feeble thaccioun to refuse.
Wherupon hir fader gan to muse,
Fulli conceyued off Appius the maner,
In hir diffence wrouhte as ye shal heer.

[p. 105]

1376

After Appius
had decided
against her,
her father took
her to one side
and stabbed
her to the
heart.

Whan Appius hadde youe his iugement
Ageyn this maide, which afrom hym stood,
Hir manli fadir, most knyhtli off entent,
Took hir appart, as he thouhte it good,
And with a knyff shadde hir herte blood:
Dempte it bettre to slen hir in clenness,
Than the tirant hir beute sholde oppresse.

1380

1384

Her chastity
was preserved.

Thus hool conserued was hir chastite*
And ondefoulid was hir maydenheede;
For Virginius to keepe hir honeste
Spared no thyng to make hir sides bleede.
But Appius for this horrible deede,
And decemvir, thoruh this onhappi chaunce,
Hadde in that cite neuer afftir gouernaunce.

1388

1392

Appius went to
prison and
there slew him-
self.

¶ As the story maketh also mencion,
Appius, ashamed off this deede,
Slouh hymself[e] fetrid in prisoun:
Off a fals iuge, loo heer the fynal meede!
And tho tribuni in Rome gan succeede,
Twen riht & wrong treuli to discerne,
And Romayn lawes iustli to gouerne.

1396

1400

Thus princes
may be over-
thrown by poor
men, who are
sometimes or-
dained by God
to chastise the
proud,

Men may heer seen as in a merour cleer,
Estatys chaungid for ther gret offenscis;
And be sum poore persone synguleer
Pryncis put down from ther magnyficencis,
Which nat considre in ther gret excellencis,
How God ordeyneth his yerde [in] sundri wise,
The poore sumwhile the pompous to chastise.

1404

1379. hir] his H.

1383. it] it was R. 1384. shadde] he shad H.

1387. chastite] virgynye B, J, R.

1389. honeste] virgynye H. 1391. this] his R, thi H.

1392. thoruh this] for his H. 1395. this] his R.

1398. Tribunes H — began to R. 1399. Betwene R.

1402. offence R. 1404. magnyficence R.

1405. excellence R.

1406. ordeynyd H, ordeyned R 3 — in] om. H, H 5.

1407. sumwhile] sumtyme R

¶ Heeron to shewe example anon riht,
Markid in story for a notable thyng,
Pausanias, off Grece a manli knyht,
Off Macedonye slouh Phelipp the kyng
At a table where he was sittying
Tween Alisandre and Olimpiades,
His wrong tauengen, amyddis al the pres.

1408 as was Pausanias, who slew Philip of Macedon,

1412

¶ Eek Salmator, a knyht off low degre,
For wronges doon in especiall,
Off manli force groundid on equite
Slouh off Cartage the prynce Hastruball,
Which brother was onto Duc Hanyball,
Beside a ryuer, as thei mette in bataile,
Callid Metaure, which renneth in Ytaile.

and Salmator, who killed Hasdrubal of Carthage at the River Metaurus.

1420

Wherefore, ye Pryncis, yiff ye list longe endure,
Beth riht weel war, be ye neuer so strong,
In your lordshepis nat to moche assure
Off surquedie the poraile to do wrong,
In your discrecioun conceyuyng euer a-mong,
Grettest dreed is, that may your staat assaile,
Whan subieccioun doth in the peeple faile.

Wherefore, Princes, if you would live long, do no wrong to the poor.

1424

1428

¶ Lenvoy.

THIS tragedie declareth in partie,
What myscheef folweth of extorsion,
Eek off spousbrech and of auoutrie
Be Tarquyn doon thoruh fals oppressioun
Onto Lucrece withynne Rome toun;
Kynges exiled for such mysgouvernaile
And fals outrages doon to the poraile.

This tragedy shews the mischief that folows extortion and adultery,

1432

Eek Appius, off wilful tirannye,
Ageyn Virginia took an accioun,
Thoruh a fals lust off froward lecherie,
Blent and fordirked his memorie* & resoun,
Which was cheeff cause and occasioun
Whi thestat off dishomme dede faile,
Thoruh fals outrages doon to the poraile.

1436 tyranny and false lust,

1440

1410. Pausamyas R — a] a ful R — manli] notable H.
1413. Betwene R. 1414. in myddis R. 1422. ye] om. R.
1427. statis R. 1428. doth] don H. 1432. thoruh] bi R.
1439. memoire B.
1441. dishomme] dishome R, H, thi Name (Na in later band)
H 5, decemvir R 3, Decemuir P.

and especially
outrages done
to the poor.

Kyng Phelipp loste sceptre and regalie
Off Macedonye the famous regeoun, 1444
Onwarli slay[e]n, myd his cheualrie
Sittyng at mete withynne his cheeff dongoun.
And grettest cause off his fallyng down,
Was whan Fortune his pride dede assaile 1448
For fals outrages doon to the poraile.

Even Duke
Hasdrubal, for
all his renown,
was slain by a
servant.

Duk Hastrubal, whom bokis magnefie
Vp to the heuene for his hih renoun,
Whos tryumphes rauht up to the skie, 1452
And hadde al Cartage in his subieccioun, —
Yit was he slayn onwarli be tresoun,
Be a seruant; loo, what doth* disauaile
Treson purposid afor in the poraile! 1456

Noble Princes,
govern your
people pru-
dently; for
nothing can
avail you more
than the re-
spect of the
poor.

Noble Pryncis, your resoun doth applie, [p. 106]
Whiche ouer the peeple ha[ue] dominacioun,
So prudentli to gouerne hem and guie,
That loue and dreed be trewe affecioun 1460
Preserue ther hertis from fals rebellioun,
Sithe to your hihnesse nothyng may mor preuaile
Than trewe subieccioun expert in the poraile.

[How Ieroboam Kyng of Israel for Idolatrie and
disobedience cam to mischeues ende.]¹

Of six kings
who next ap-
peared to
Bochas, Jero-
boam spoke first,

NEXT these stories, in Bochas as I fynde, 1464
Ther dede appeere onto his presence
Kynges sexe, hym praieng to ha[ue] mynde
Vpon ther fall be onwar violence
From ther estatis off roial excellence. 1468
And tofor alle, I fynde, that ther cam
Off al Israel kyng Ieroboam.

declaring his
fall with a pale
face.

Onto myn auctour he began* declare
His dedli compleynt with a pale face, 1472
His gret myscheuys and his euel fare,
And how he fill down from his kyngli place
Thoruh gret onhappis, which dede his herte embrace,

1448. Was] *om.* R.

1449. outrage R. 1451, 52. Vp to] vnto R.

1455. doth] it doth B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P — auaile P.

1461. ther] your R — fals] al R. 1462. nothyng may]
may no thyng R.

1471. began] began to B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P.

1472. fale] ful pale R. 1475. happis R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 44 recto.

And, as this story pley[n]li hath deuysed, 1476
For his offencis how he was chastised.

An ydolatre* he was, as it is told,
Reised up auteres, off veray force & myht,
Set therupon too calueren of peur gold, 1480
Dede hem worshepe, ageyn al skele & riht,
Gaff euel exa[m]ple in the peeplis siht,
Whan he dede with fumys and encens
To fals ydoles ondeu reuerens. 1484

He was an
idolater, who
set up two
golden calves,

Fro the temple he made the peeple gon,
Preestis ordeyned afftir his owne guise,
Forsook the tribe off Leuy and Aaron,
And vpon Bethel his offryng gan deuise. 1488
And whil he dede onleefful sacrefise,
God, that weel knew off hym the fals entent,
Fro Ierusalem a prophete to hym sent.

and ordained
priests in his
own fashion.

Which hym rebuked off his mysgouernaunce, 1492
And gan the pereiles to hym specefie;
Told hym afor[n]e, for to do vengau[n]ce
Off Daud[s] kyn ther sholde come on Iosie,
Which sholde his preestis, that falsli coude lie, 1496
Manli destroie, and slen hem alle attonys
And into asshes brenne hem flessch and bonys.

God sent a
prophet,
Jadan, to re-
buke him, say-
ing that his
priests would
be destroyed by
Joshua,

And in tokne off ther destruccioun,
The prophete told among hem all, 1500
How his auteris sholde bowe doun,
And his ydoles from ther stage fall,
Whom that foolis ther goddis falsli call,
Which ha[ue] no power to helpe in no manere, 1504
For thei may nouthur fee[le], see nor heere.

and that his
idols, called
gods by fools,
would be over-
thrown.

Afftir this prophete, Iadan, hadde told
These said[e] signes pley[n]li to the kyng,
His auter fill on pecis manyfold, 1508

After Jadan
had finished
speaking, the
altar fell to
pieces.

1476. this] his R. 1477. offence H. 1478. ydolastre B.

1479. auteres] Aucterz H.

1480. Ther vpon sett R — too] om. H — caluys R, calves R 3,
calues P — peur] cleen H.

1483. he] that he H. 1489. whil] whan R.

1493. bi gan R. 1495. Daud H, R 3, H 5.

1502. stages R.

1505. nouthur fee[le] see nor] neither se fee[le] ne heer R — fee[le]
see] see fele H, P, R 3 — nouthur] not R 3.

1506. Afftir] Affir þat H. 1508. auteris fyllen R.

And ouerturned bakward his offryng;
 For which the kyng, furiously lokyng,
 Put foorth his hand, the story maketh mynde,
 Bad his men the prophete take and bynde. 1512

The king was
 furious, and,
 stretching out
 his arm, ordered
 Jadan to be
 seized and
 bound. But
 suddenly his
 arm dried up,

And as he his arm rauht out on lengthe,
 Hadde no power it to withdrawe ageyn,
 Wex onweeldi, contract and lost his strengthe.
 And whan the kyng hath these toknys seyn, 1516
 And how the prophete spak no woord in veyn,
 Gretli astonyd, koude sey no more,
 But prai[e]de Iadan his arm for to restore.

and only by
 Jadan's prayer
 was it restored.

And be his praier and mediacioun, 1520
 Off his arm, afftir this vengauunce,
 Ther was anon maad restitucioun,
 And off his peyne feelith alegaunce.
 For which the kyng, with ful gret instaunce, 1524
 Requered hym to be so gracious,
 That day tabide and dynen in his hous.

The king then
 invited Jadan
 to dine with
 him, but
 Jadan refused
 and went away.

But the prophete wolde nat assente,
 Nouthur with hym to ete nor to drynke; 1528
 Took his asse, and foorth anon he wente,
 On whose departyng the kyng gan sore thynke,
 And fantasies gan in his herte synke,
 Speciali whan he taketh heede 1532
 Off all his toknys, how thei were trewe in deede.

God had com-
 manded him
 neither to eat
 nor drink in
 that city.

God bad Iadan in this gret emprise
 To Ieroboam first whan he was sent,
 Ete nor drynke, in no maner wise, 1536
 In that cite whil he was present;
 But a-nother prophete off entent,
 Ful old and slyh, on the tother side,
 Compellid hath this Iadan to abide. 1540

But one of
 Jeroboam's
 false prophets
 persuaded him
 to disobey
 God's com-
 mandment,

Hym afforcyng be fals collusioun [p. 107]
 To resorte ageyn to* the cite,
 And to make no contradiccioun
 With hym to dyne off fraternyte, 1544
 To hym affermyng, it may non other be:

1519. for] *om.* R. 1524. ful] *om.* H. 1525. Requeryng H.
 1528. nor to drynke] neithir drynke R.
 1534. Iadan] Iason R. 1535. Ieroboam] Ierusalem R.
 1536. nor] neithir R. 1537. while that R.
 1538. But yit R. 1539. on the tother] vpon that oper R.
 1542. to] onto B, J — the] that R.

For God sent hym as to his freend and brother,
Tapide with hym & pleynli with non other,

Off freendliheed and trewe affeccoun

1548 and while they
sat at meat
together, God
said to Jadan,

Withynne his hous to shewen his presence,

For a repast and a refeccioun:

This Godis will and fulli his sentence.

To whos woordis the prophete gaff credence.

1552

And as thei sat at dyner bothe ifeere,

God onto Iadan seide in this manere:

“For the brekyng off my comaundement,

Thi grete offence and transgressioun,

1556

That thou hast been so wilful negligent,

Thou shalt endure this punycioun,

Been* al to-torn and rent off a leoun,

And in thi cuntre thou shalt nat recure,

With prophetis to haue thi sepulture.”

1560

“For breaking
my command-
ment, thou
shalt be slain
by a lion and
never return to
thy country.”

Off which[e] tithyng, this Iadan nothyng fayn,

Gan to departe with a ful heuy thouht:

Off a leoun myd off the weye slayn;

But his asse harmyd was riht nouht.

A ful gret merueile, yiff it be weel souht,

The leoun sittynge as in ther diffence,

And kept hem bothe from al violence.

1568

Alle these toknys myht[e] nat conuerte

Ieroboam from* his iniquite;

Godis warnyng hym list nat to aduerte,

Nor be his prophete correctid for to be.

Wherfore, God wolde that he sholde see

Vengaunce folwe, as it fill in deede,

Bothe vpon hym and [on] his kynreede.

1572

and Jeroboam
continued in
his iniquity.

A sone he hadde, which fill in gret siknesse,

Callid Abimen, the book doth specefie;

For which the kyng bad the queen hir dresse,

To gon disguised, withoute cumpanye,

Onto a prophete* which callid was Achye,

1576

His son Abijah
fell ill, and he
bade the queen
go disguised to
the prophet
Abijah for ad-
vice.

Hym to requere, treuli for to seye

1580

Whethir the child sholde lyue or deye.

1551. This is R. 1554. in] on H. 1559. Been] Bien B.

1562. tydyngs R. 1563. Began R — ful] om. R.

1564. myd] in the myddis R. 1570. from] for B.

1574. as] riht as R.

1575. on] also on R, om. H, J, R 3, H 5, P.

1580. a] the H — On taprophete B — was] is H — Ahye P.

But God
shewed Ahijah
that it was
Jeroboam's
wife who came
to him,

And in his inward sihte contemplatiff,
God shewed hym bi cleer inspeccioun,
Off Ieroboam how she was the wiff,
For al hir sleiht transformacioun.
For nouthur fallas nor fals decepcioun
May be to God, but it be parceyued;
For he nys prophetis may nat be deceyued. 1584

and he told her
to inform
Jeroboam, that
since God had
raised him
from a servant
to a king,

She cam to hym in a straunge weede;
At thentryng he callid hir bi hir name:
"Com foorth," quod he, "for it is no neede
To hide thi-silff[e], as it were for shame;
For the trouthe treuli to attame,*
God hath youe me fulli knowlechyng
What thou shalt answer & seyn onto the kyng. 1592

and as he was
ungrateful and
an idolater,

Sey pleyntli to hym, & marke it in thi thouht,
In thi repair these woordis rehersyng,
'Sith God hath maad the, & reised the up off nouht,
From a seruaunt to regnen as a kyng, 1600
Fro Daudidis kyn, most worthi[ly] regnyng,
Partid the kyngdam & youen it onto the,
And thou onkynde theroff canst nothyng see,—

and had for-
gotten God's
goodness to
him,

His grete goodnesse is out off remembraunce, 1604
Fulli forgetyn off thi froward pride;
In fals[e] goddis put thyn affiaunce,
God aboue falsli set a-side,
Wherefore from the anon he shal deuyde 1608
Thy kyngdam hool, withoute mor delay,
And fro thi lyne the crowne take away.

God would take
the kingdom
from him and
his line and let
dogs eat their
carcasses.

And for thou hast to thi confusioun
Thi feith, onfeithful, to false goddis take, 1612
Wrongli refused thi relegeoun
Off God aboue, & pleyntli hym forsake,
This thende which that thou shalt make:
The and thi kyn no man may socoure; 1616
Flessh, skyn and bon houndis shal deuoure.

1583. his] hir H. 1587. neithir R.
1589. nys] ne his R, J, P, nor his H, R 3 — he nys] henys H 5.
1591. hir callid R. 1592. for] for certis R.
1594. tattame B. 1596. answer & seyn] make answer R.
1597. pleynt R. 1598. these] ther H. 1601. worthi J.
1603. theroff] om. R.
1607. God] And god R — settist R.
1609. Thy] this H, The R. 1610. schal take R.
1615. This is the eende R — that] om. R.

And at then tryng hom to thi cite,
 Thi sone and his, thou shalt fynde hym ded,
 Off al his kyn thouh ther was non but he
 Founde veray good[e]; tak heeroff good heed.””
 Off which answeere the queen fill in gret dreed,
 En tryng the cite in especiall,
 Hir child was ded, & lay cold be the wall.

1620 “And you’ll
 find your son
 dead when you
 go home.”

Off this warnyng the kyng took non heed, [p. 108]
 But made hym redi with ful gret apparaile, —
 Fourti thousand with hym he dede leed
 Off manli men armed in plate & maile,
 With kyng Abias to haue a gret bataile.
 The which Abias, that was off Iuda kyng,
 Onto his peeple saide at ther meetyng:

1624 The king
 didn’t care, and
 set out to fight
 Abijah, king of
 Judah, who told
 his soldiers that
 God would not
 allow an idola-
 ter to defeat
 them,

“O noble knyhtis, hath o thyng in memorie,*
 No man venquysshith, platli to conclude,
 With gret peeple, nor getith hym victorie
 With nombres hepid nor gret multitude;
 Fals ydolatre, God will hem dillude,
 Nat suffre his seruauantis that be trewe & sad
 Off mescreantis to been ouerlad.

1632

Tryumphe is non founde off newe or old
 In these ydoles off ston nor siluer sheene,
 Nor in caluere off metal maad or gold,
 Youe to that parti which ontreuli meene.
 And sithe that God knoweth our quarel cleene,
 Ther is non hope, force non nor myht
 With hem that grounde hem a cause ageyn[e]s ryht.

1640 and that the
 golden calves
 would be of no
 avail to Jero-
 boam.

Hope off victorie* stant on rihtwisnesse,
 Off them that caste ther synful liff tamende,
 And list forsake wrong and al falsnesse,
 And with hool herte onto the Lord entende;
 Which shal this day his grace to you sende,

1648 “Hope of vic-
 tory stands on
 righteousness,”
 said he.

1622. queen] kyng R.

1624. Hir] His R — wall] way R.

1626. ful] om. R.

1629. kyng] om. H, R 3 — to haue a gret bataile] to haven
 in bataile R.

1632. hath] haue R. 1632, 34. memoire, victoire B.

1634. nor] neithir R, om. H — hym] om. R, J, P.

1636. ydolatre] R. 1639. Tryumphe] R — or] nor R.

1640. nor] & R. 1641. caluere] caluys R, calues P, R 3.

1644. nor] ne R. 1646. victoire B.

1649. hool] the hool R. 1650. his] om. H.

Our trewe cause iustly* to termyne."
And thus Abias gan his tale fyne.

1652

Fifty thousand
of Jeroboam's
men were slain,

His preestis gan ther trumpes for to blowe;
And kyng Abias thoruh his hih renoun
Gaff to his peeple, bothe to hih & lowe,
Ful manli confort and consolacioun.
And fifti thousand be computacioun
Wer slayn that day, which ful proudli cam
Vpon the parti off kyng Ieroboam.

1656

and Jeroboam
and all his line
were eaten by
dogs.

And al the parti off Ieroboam,
And al that wer[e]n off his lyne born,
Afftir this bataile onto myscheeff cam,
Whan thei were slayn, with houndis al to-torn,
As the prophete hadde hem told befor.
But for the kyng took theroff non heed,
With sodeyn vengauunce God quit hym his meed.

1660

1664

[How Zareas Kyng of Ethiope was slayn in bataile.] ¹

After Jeroboam,
Zerah, king of
Ethiopia and
India, appeared,
almost blind for
weeping, for he
had been de-
spoiled of his
wealth and
slain in battle
by King Asa.

AFFTIR hym to Bochas dede appeere,
Next in ordre pleynli, as I fynde,
On Zareas, with a sorweful cheere.
And he was kyng off Ethiope and Ynde,
Whos eyen wern almost with wepyng blynde,
Praieng myn auctour, his onhappi chaunce
With othre woful to putte in remembraunce,

1668

1672

And that he wolde recorden be scripture
His sodeyn fall and dolorous distresse,
And his diffamous hatful disconfiture,
With the dispoilyng off his gret richesse,
And how kyng Asaph, thoruh his hih noblesse,
Myd* his peeple, as he dede hym assaile,
Hath hym venquysshid & slay[e]n in bataile.

1676

1680

1651. iustly] treuli B, truly J, P, trewly H 5.

1652. his tale] take his R. 1656. manli] many H.

1659. kyng] om. R.

1669. 3oreas H.

1671. with wepyng almost R.

1672. his] that his H.

1676. diffamous] famous R — scomfiture H.

1678. hih] om. H — Asaph] Asa P.

1679. Myd] And B, J, H 5, P, Amyd R 3 In myddis R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 45 recto.

[How Adab kyng of Ierusalem lost sceptre & crowne.]¹

OFF Israel than cam the woful kyng
 Callid Adab, ful pitousli wepyng,
 Onto Bochas his compleynt rehersyng,
 How kyng Basa, be subtil fals werkyng,
 With sodeyn slauhtre caused his fallyng,
 Whan Fortune gan falsli [on hym] frowne,
 And took oniustli from hym sceptre & crowne.

Next, King
 Adab came to
 complain of his
 sudden slaugh-
 ter by King
 Baasha.

1684

[How the vengeable prince Zambrias set a toure on fire and brent himsilf.]¹

NEXT cam Zambrias, a prince [ful] vengable, 1688
 Which slouh kyng Helam be fals tresoun,
 That fond also Fortune ful onstable;
 For this Zambrias off entencioun
 Hath moordrid hym withynne the cheeff dongoun 1692
 Off his castell, with a ful gret[e] route,
 As he onwarli laide a siege aboute.

Zimri, a
 revengeful
 prince, who
 slew Elah,

But Amaryn, a prynce off ful gret myht,
 Cam into Tharse, a famous strong cite,
 And cast hym pleyntli, lik a worthi knyht,
 On this Zambrias auenged for to be,
 Hym to destroie withoute merci or pite.
 But into a* tour as Zambrias wente,
 Set it affire, and so hymself he brente.

burnt himself
 up in a tower
 to escape pun-
 ishment at the
 hands of Omri.

1696

1700

[Off Kyng Achab & Iezabel his wiff.]²

WYTH sihhes sore & wepyng inportable,
 Cam kyng Achab onto Iohn Bochas,
 Whos hertli sorwe was incomparable.
 And, compleynyng, ful ofte [he] seide, alas!
 Besechyng hym to write his woful cas,

King Achab,
 with inportable
 weeping, be-
 sought Bochas
 to write his
 and his daugh-
 ter Athaliah's
 story.

1704

1681. woful] wolful R.

1682. Adas R, Nadab P. 1688. ful] om. H, J.

1689. fals] ful fals H, R 3, H 5. 1695. Amri P.

1696. into] to H — Tharsa P. 1697. worthi] manly R.

1699] om. R. 1700. inta B, in a R.

1701. he] om. R, R 3.

1704. hertli] erthly H. 1705. ful] of R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 45 recto.

² MS. J. leaf 45 verso.

- Compile his fallyng and the fate ifeere
Off Athalia his owne douhter deere. 1708
- He was a wicked man
and had a
cruel and lust-
ful wife called
Jezebel. To God aboue most contrarious [p. 109]
This Achab was in al his gouernaunce,
And hadde a wiff cruel and lecherous
Callid Iezabel, which set al hir plesauce 1712
On Godis prophetis for to do vengauce:
In the Bible ther malice men may see,
And ydolatres* thei were, bothe he and she.
- Both were
idolaters, and
God first pun-
ished them
with three
years of
drouth. God for ther trespacis, as it was weel seyn, 1716
Afforshewed be trewe prophesie,
Sente thre yeer nouthen deuh nor reyn
Vpon the erthe ther greyn to multeplie;
Till eftt ageyn, bi praiser off Helie, 1720
Holsum watres from heuene gan descende,
Which gaff hem cause ther cursid liff tamende.
- But Jezebel, an
accursed
woman, slew 300
prophets, be-
sides Naboth for
his vineyard. But his wiff, that cursid Iezabel,
To ech thyng hatful which that was dyuyne, 1724
An hundred prophetis she slouh in Israel,
Onto Baal for thei ne* wolde enclyne;
And she also slouh Naboth for his vyne,
Thoruh whos outrage & fals oppressioun 1728
Achab was brouht to his confusioun.
- Not long after
this, Achab,
fatally wounded
in his chariot,
was deuoured
by dogs as
Elijah prophe-
sied, Off his enmyes outraied in bataile,
With a sharp arwe cauht his fatal wounde,
Till al his blood be bledying dede raile* 1732
Aboute his chaar, with many dropis rounde;
That the woordis wer ful trewe founde
Off Helias, which told hym, as it stood,
That hungri houndis sholde likke his blood. 1736
- and Jezebel fell
out of a tower.
Beware, Princes,
of false counsel
given by your
wives. In a cite, than callid Iezrael,
Doun from a tour ioynnyng to the wall,
The said[e] queen, callid Iezabel;
Was ouercast & hadde a dedli fall. 1740
Touchyng these myscheuys, for she was cause of all,

1707. his] be H — the] his R.

1710. al] om. R. 1714. may men R.

1715. ydolastres B, ydolatrerris R. 1716. ther] his H.

1718. neithir dewe ne R. 1723. that] this R.

1726. ne] nat B, H 5 — wold not R, wolde nat J, would not P.

1731. With] Off R. 1732. raile] fayle B, H, R, J, H 5, R 3,

P, & other MSS. and prints.

1737. In] And in R — than] om. R — bat was callid Ieziael H.

1738. the] a R.

Bewar ye Pryncis, remembryng al your lyues,
Teschewen fals counsail youen by your wyues.

[Off queene Gatholia for hir tyrannye slayn.] ¹

NEXT to Achab in ordre dede sue
Gatholia, with doolful contenaunce
Bochas besechyng, as she thouht it due,*
Hir sodeyn fall to putte in remembraunce,
Sours and cheff roote off sorwe and myschaunce, 1748
Vsurpacioun and off fals couetise,
Lik as hir story heeraftir shal deuise.

1744 Athaliah, who
followed Ahab,

She was vpreised be fauour in thre thynges;
For fader, brother, and also hir husbonde
Wer in that tyme echon crownyd kynges,
With sceptre and suerd, as ye shal vndirstonde,
Many emprises ther daies took on honde;
And how Fortune ther hihnesse dede assaile, 1756
I caste shortli to make rehersaile.

1752 was fortunate
in that her
father, brother
and husband
were kings;

She fill off Fortune in thunhappi boundis,
First whan hir fader was with an arwe ded,
His blood vplikked with cruel hungri houndis,
A-boute his chaar[e] rennyng doun ful red.
His bodi pale lay, who that took heed,
Lik a careyn, naked and dispoiled,
With foul blak erthe myd the feeld isoiled. 1764

1760 but her father
was slain, and
his body lay
like carrion,
soiled with
earth in the
field.

Cause of a-nother onhappi heuynesse
And off hir dedli desolacioun,
Was, the peeple felli dede hem dresse
Off Arabie in ther rebellious
Ageyn hir husbonde, off entencioun
To robbe his tresour to ther auountage,
And his richesse be outraious pillage.

1768 Another cause
of sorrow to
her was that
the people of
Arabia rebelled
against her
husband

1741. this myscheff R. 1742. al] of R.

1744. dede] ther did R.

1745. Athalia P — ful doolful R.

1746. she thouht it due] hym thouhte due B.

1748. sorwe and myschaunce] myscheff & sorowe R.

1752. hir] om. R. 1757. caste] purpose R.

1762. good heed R. 1763. careyn] bareyn R.

1764. foul] ful R, H, full R 3 — myd] in myddis R, amyd
H, R 3, P — isoiled] spoiled R.

1766. off] om. H. 1767. Was] Was whan R — did felly R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 45 verso.

- and robbed^f and
slew his sub-
jects. Her
husband was
infected by the
plague and
died,
- Summe off his meyne thei puttyn in prisoun — 1772
Ther was ageyn hem maked no diffence, —
Spared nouthur cite, boruh nor toun,
Slouh man and child be sturdi violence.
Hir lord infect with sodeyn pestilence, 1776
Conceyued fulli bi his maladie,
There was no geyn but he muste [nedis] deie.
- and the
stench of his
body was so
awful that no-
body would
carry him to
his sepulchre.
- Afftir his deth, most wrechchid and odible,
His body corrupt, his bowelis fell down; 1780
Off his careyn the stench was so horrible,
Their infect aboute hym enviroun
With so gret horroure and putrefaccioun,
That no man myhte abiden nor endure 1784
To brynge his bodi onto sepulture.
- Her third mis-
fortune was the
death of her
uncle, King
Joram, after
which she
slew all the
blood of David
so as to be
sole ruler of
Judea.
- Hir thriddle onhapp, wheroff she was ful fayn
That Fortune list hir efft assaile,
Made hir vncl, kyng Ioram, to be slayn 1788
With an arwe, as he fledde in bataile.
She supposyng it gretli sholde auaille,
Lik a woman most furious and wode,
She off kyng Dauid slouh al the roial blood. 1792
- Hir purpos was to gouerne al the rewm, [p. 110]
Alone hirsilff ta dominacioun,
To regne in Iuda and Ierusalem,
This Gatholia be vsurpacioun. 1796
And for that cause in hir entencioun,
With mortal suerd she made all tho to fyne
That were descendid from Dauid down be lyne.
- Except Joash,
aged one year,
none of David's
kin were left
alive, and
Joash's life
was saved by
Jehosheba,
- Except on Ioas ther leffte non alyue, 1800
Child off a yeer, sone off kyng Ochosit,
Whom Iosaketh, the story doth descryue,
Off verai pite cauhte a fantasie
The child to saue, that he shal nat deie, 1804
From the malice off Gatholia.
And she was wiff to bisshop Ioiada.

1773. made R. 1774. nouthur] neithir R — nor] neithir R.
1776. infect] enfectid H, effect R — sodeyn] contagious R.
1778. nedis] om. R, J, H 5. 1780. fell] fall H.
1783. gret] gre H. 1784. nor] ne R.
1786. onhapp] vnhappy R.
1794. ta] to haue R.
1796. Gotholia R, Gathalia H, Athalia P. 1798. to] om. R.
1802. Iosabeth R, P. 1804. shal] shuld R.
1806. And] As R.

She and this bisshop, with hool herte & enteer,
 Kepte this child in ful secre wise
 Withynne the temple the space off seuene yeer,
 And in the seuenta, the story doth deuise,
 Ioiada took on hym this emprise:
 Yonge Ioas withynne a certeyn day
 Be iust[e] title to crowne hym yiff he* may.

wife of Bishop
 Jehoiada. For
 1808 seven years
 they kept
 young Joash in
 the temple.
 Then Jehoiada
 called a coun-
 cil and pro-
 1812 posed to
 crown Joash
 king,

His massageris he sendith out anon,
 Off pryncis, tribunes gan a counseil call,
 Off preestis eek, and leuytes euerichon.
 And whan he hadde discured to hem all
 Hool his entent, thus it is befall:
 Sworn and assentid, as it was sitting,
 That yonge Ioas shal be crownyd kyng.

1816

"For be promys, which that is dyuyne,"
 Quod Ioiada, "yiff ye taken heede,
 God hath behestid to Dauid and his lyne,
 And assurid onto his kynreede,
 In Ierusalem how thei shal succeede;
 And thouh Ioas be yong & tendre off myht,
 He to the crowne hath neuer-the-lesse ryht.

1820

as God had
 promised that
 David's line
 should rule in
 Jerusalem.

1824

In this mateer I wil nat that ye slepe,
 But to shewe your trewe deligence,
 On foure parties the temple for to keepe,
 That no man entre be nō violence;
 And in the myddis, be roial excellence,"
 Quod this bisshop, "no man shal us lette,
 On Ioas hed a crowne for to sette."

1828 "No man shall
 prevent our
 setting a crown
 on his head."

1832

And whan ech thyng was brouht onto the poynt,
 His hih estat tencrece and magnefie,
 The people anon, whan he was enoynt,
 "Viuat rex!" thei began to crie.
 And whan Gatholia gan this thyng espie,
 For veray ire and the sodeyn wonder,
 Off malencoli hir clothes kitte assonder.

When Joash
 was anointed,
 1836 the people cried,
 "Long live the
 King!"
 Athaliah
 ran to the
 temple in a
 fury and bade
 1840 her men slay
 the young king.

Ran to the temple and gan make affray
 With hir meyne, and to crie loude,
 Bad hem go slen, and make no delay,

1844

1808. secret H. 1813. he] she B, J, R 3, H.
 1823. and] & to R. 1824. onto] to H. 1830. On] of H.
 1838. to] for to H. 1839. tespye H.
 1841. kutte R, cutte H. 1844. go] to H.

The yonge kyng, in al the haste thei coude:
 Hir venym hid vnder a couert cloude,
 Al attonys hir purpos to recure,
 Be sodeyn malice she gan that day discure. 1848

The temple
 however was
 well guarded,
 and she was
 seized by the
 centurions and
 soon afterwards
 put to death.

The temple kept, entre had she non,
 Peeple ordeyned awaityng for the nonys;
 And or* she myhte any ferthere gon,
 Clenli armed, the centurionys 1852
 The cruel queen assailed al attonys.
 And off hir malice to writen a short tale,
 Thei slouh hir afftir off Cedron in the vale.

Lo, this is the
 end of murder
 and tyranny!
 Noble Princes,
 beware of doing
 wrong to right-
 ful heirs.

Loo, heer the eende off moordre and tirannye; 1856
 Loo, heer the eende off vsurpacioun;
 Loo, heer the eende off fals conspiracye;
 Loo, heer the eende off fals presumpcioun!
 Born rihtful heires, wrongli to put hem down. 1860
 O noble Pryncis, thowh God hath maad you strong,
 To rihtful heires be war ye do no wrong!

¶ Lenvoye.

These tragedies
 are of princes,
 warned by God,
 yet failing to
 rise from their
 sins.

THESE tragedies testatis & degrees,
 Fulli declareth the decepciouns 1864
 Off Fortunys fals mutabilitēes
 Shewed in provyncis, citees and eek touns.
 Pryncis onwarli lost ther posessiouns,
 Which from ther synnes, in no maner wise, — 1868
 Hadde off God warnyng, and list nat for to rise.

Mighty kings
 were cast down
 unawares from
 their felicity:
 Jeroboam for
 his idolatry and
 oppression;

Mihti kynges cast down from ther sees,
 Loste ther lyues and ther regeouns,
 Onwarli throwe from ther felicitees: 1872
 Ieroboam for his oppressiouns
 And for his froward fals oblaciouns
 Doon to ydoles, his story doth deuise,
 Had off God warnyng, & list nat for to rise. 1876

1846] *om.* R. 1851. or] ar B.

1855. Thei] The R — off] *corrected to on or at H.*

1860. to] *om.* H, R 3.

1863. These tragedies testatis] This tragedie the astatis R —
 testatis] to estates P.

1865. Fortunys] fortune R.

1869. aryse R.

Achab also hadde gret aduersitees
 Thoruh fals counsail and exortaciouns
 Off Iezabel, roote off iniquitees;
 Dede to his peeples gret extorsiouns:
 She slouh prophetis, Godis champiouns.
 Bothe he and she, most cursid in ther guise,
 Had off God warnyng, & list nat for to rise.

[p. 111] Ahab for his
 extortions, and
 his abominable
 wife Jezebel,
 who slew all
 the prophets;

1880

Gathalia with hir duplicitees
 And conspired fals intrusiouns
 Slouh Dauides seed, tentre ther dignitees,
 And to possede ther domynaciouns;
 But for hir hatful fals collusiouns
 Onwarly slayn, for hir gret couetise,
 Had off God warnyng, & list nat for to rise.

1884 Athaliah
 for murdering
 David's de-
 scendants.

1888

Pryncis remembreth in your prosperitees,
 And seeth afor in your discreciouns,
 Wrong clymyng up of statis or degrees,
 Outher be moordre or be fals tresouns,
 Axeth a fall for ther fynal guerdouns;
 Namli off them that the Lord despise,
 And for his warnyng list nat for to rise.

1892 Princes, remem-
 ber in your
 prosperity that
 wrongful usur-
 pation either by
 murder or
 treason invites
 a fall.

1896

[How Dido queen of Cartage slouh hirsilf for con-
 seruacion of hir chastite.]¹

Now must I putte my reud[e] stile in pres,
 To queen Dido make my passage:
 Hir lord Siche was preest to Hercules,
 Hir fadir Belus, falle into gret age,
 Kyng off Tیره, and she queen off Cartage.
 And it is rad in bookis that be trewe,
 How first in Tیره was founde purpil hewe.

Dido, queen of
 Carthage, was
 the wife of
 Sychæus; her
 father, Belus,
 king of Tyre,
 invented purple.

1900

1904

1877. *This stanza is omitted in R.* 1878. counseiles H.
 1880. his] hir H. 1884. Athalia R, H, P, Athalya H 5.
 1885. intrusiouns] entenciouns H.
 1886. Dauythis R, H — tentre] tencres H.
 1890. aryse R.
 1891. in] om. H. 1893. statis or] estatis & R.
 1894. moordre] word R. 1895. ther] the H.
 1897. his] no R.
 1900. Siche] Sicheus H, P.
 1901. Belus] Bolas R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 46 verso.

Cadmus in-
vented the
alphabet, and
his brother
discovered
the red of
vermilion.

Cadmus fond first lettres for to write,
Gaff hem to Grekis, as maad is menciouⁿ,
Whos brother Fenix, as clerkis eek endite,
Fond first the colour off vermelionⁿ.
And off Cartage, the famous myhti toun,
This said[e] Dido, hir story doth expresse,
How she was bothe queen and founderesse;

1908

Dido's husband,
Sychæus, was
slain for his
riches by her
brother Pyg-
malion,

But hir husbonde was cheeff lord and sire,
Callid Sicheus, ful famous off renoun,
Off this noble cite named Tire,
Hadde gret tresour & gret possessioun.
And for envie kyng Pigmalionⁿ,
Brother to Dido, this Siche slouh in deede,
Off fals entent his richesse to posseede.

1912

1916

and Dido in
her grief fled
from Tyre with
her husband's
treasure.

Dido this slauhtre took greuou^sli at herte,
Sore compleynyng this onhappi chaunce,
Caste she wolde, yiff she myhte asterte,
Fleen out off Tire and hirsilff auauⁿce,
With al the tresour and the habundaunce
Behynde lefft whan hir lord was ded,
Hir shippis entryng, went away for dreed.

1920

1924

Knowing the
avarice of
Pygmalion,

She knew & dradde the gredi auarice
Off hir brother, kyng Pigmalionⁿ,
And how that hatful onstauⁿchable vice
Was ground and roote & cheeff occasioun
Whi that hir lord was slay[e]n in that toun.
For whom ful ofte she cried welaway,
Whos deth was cause whi she fledde away.

1928

1932

she felt certain
that if she re-
mained he
would try to
injure her.

She hadde also this opynyoun,
Which caused most hir hertli heuynesse,
That sithe hir brothir, kyng Pigmalionⁿ,
Hadde slayn hir lord for his gret richesse,
Yiff she abod, that he wolde hym dresse,
Parcel for malice, parcel for couetise,
To haue hir tresour sum tresoun to practise.

1936

1910. hir] the R.

1914. named] callid J, was callid H.

1919. greuou^sli] gretly R. 1920. this] his R.

1923. and] & al R. 1924. whan] whanne whan R.

1928. onstauⁿchable] vnstable R, vnchaungeable H.

1932. whi] whi þat R.

1935. sithe] sih R.

And for teschewe his malice and tresoun,
 For hir nauye she maketh ordenaunce
 Bauys off them, in whom, as be resoun,
 She sholde off riht sette hir affiaunce.
 And thei ful redy hir to do plesaunce,
 Be on assent, for nothyng wolde faile,
 With faire Dido out off that lond to saile.

1940 So on the ad-
 vice of her
 nobles she
 sailed away
 from Tyre,

1944

In Cipre first was hir arryuaile;
 And ther she fond[e] be a ryuer side,
 Off yong[e] maidnes, with ful riche apparaile,
 Sexti and ten in the same tide,
 Which in the temple off Venus dede abide,
 Afftir the custom, as I can reporte,
 Off Cipriens straungeris to disporte.

1948 and first ar-
 rived in Cy-
 prus, where she
 found seventy
 maidens, priest-
 esses of the
 temple

1952

And in ther moste feithful humble wise,
 Afftir the rihtis off Cipre the cuntre,
 Onto Venus ech day do sacrefise,
 Them to conserue in ther virgenyte,
 Duryng ther liff to lyue in chastite,
 Neuer to been ioyned in mariage;
 And with queen Dido thei went* to Cartage.

1956 of Venus,
 vowed to
 chastity, who
 accompanied
 her to Car-
 thage.

1960

In ther passage fill a gret meracle,
 As Seruyus maketh mençioun;
 For Dido took off Iuno this oracle,
 Outher baperyng or bi auiçioun,*
 Off Cartage to beelde that myhti toun.
 And at reuerence off that gret goddessse,
 She to tho parties faste gan hir dresse,

[p. 112] When Carthage
 was founded
 a great miracle
 occurred, as
 Servius tells:

1964

The said[e] cite statli for to founde.
 And hir werkmen, as thei therthe souhte,
 An oxes hed off auenture thei founde;
 And to queen Dido anon the hed thei brouhte,
 Menyng wheroff to serchyn out she* thouhte.
 And hir clerkis in ther dyuynaile,
 Tolde it was tokne off seruage & trauaile.

1968 Dido's work-
 men unearthed
 the head of
 an ox while
 digging, and
 her wise men
 told her that
 it was a token
 of servitude.

1972

1942. Bauys] Be a devis R. 1944. hir] for R.

1954. in ther] the H. 1958. ther] the R.

1960. went] wenten B, R, J — to] vn to H.

1962. maketh] make R.

1964. bi apperyng J, R, H, P, R 3, H 5 — or] outhir H, H 5 —
 auiçioun] dyuysion R, aduiçioun J, P, a vision R 3 — or bi
 auiçioun] outhir bauysion B.

1971. anon the hed] the hed anon R, H, H 5.

1972. Menyng] Mevyng R — she] thei B, J.

For which she lefte to beeldyn [in] that place,
 And gan remeue, as she ouhte off riht; 1976
 And fro then[ne]s but a litil space
 A soil she fond ful delectable off siht;
 And as hir werkmen with ther ful[le] myht
 The ground gan serche, anon, or thei took heed, 1980
 The stori tellith, thei fond an horsis hed.

So she began
 to dig elsewhere
 and found a
 horse's head,
 which was a
 good omen.
 And there she
 built Carthage.

And bi expownyng off hir dyuynours,
 Fond [that] this beeste gretli myhte auaie
 Onto pryncis & myhti conquerours, 1984
 Necessarie* in werre and in bataile.
 And for no wiht hir noblesse sholde assaile,
 Cartage she bilte, off so gret excellence,
 Geyn all enmyes to stonden at diffence. 1988

Some books say
 that she pur-
 chased as much
 land as could
 be surrounded
 by an ox's skin,

Summe bookis declare and specefie,
 Dido dede as moche lond purchase
 As a skyn in round myhte ocupie
 Off an oxe, theron to beelde a place; 1992
 The ground cumpasid took a large space,
 Which strongli bilt, thus it is befall,
 Afftir the skyn men dede it Birsas call.

and when the
 city was walled
 it took the
 names Carthage
 and Birsas after
 the skin.

And whan this cite myhtili was wallid,
 Afftir a skyn, wrouht be good curray, 1996
 The name take, Carta it was callid, —
 Lethir off Birsas, pleynli this no nay,
 Took eek his name duryng many a day, — 2000
 Carta and Birsas knet in ther language,
 As moch to seyne as this woord Cartage.

It stands in
 Africa and was
 built in honour
 of Iuno, in the
 time of David.

And in Affrik stant the teritorie
 Wher she bilte this cite delectable, 2004
 Founded it in laude and in memorie
 Off myhti Iuno, the goddesse honourable,
 The cite wallid, with tour[es] strong & stable,

1975. in] *om.* H, R 3, J, H 5.

1977. but] *om.* H. 1978. delitable R.

1981. horsis] horse H, R 3, P, hors J, H 5.

1983. that] *om.* J, H, P, H 5, R 3 — Fond] & H.

1985. Necessaire B. 1988. Ageyn R.

1993. ful large R. 1994. bilt] belte R 3, bylded P.

1997. curray] coraie R, Corray H.

1999. pleynli this no nay] this is no way R.

2000. a] *om.* R. 2004. delitable R.

2005. 2nd in] *om.* H.

2007. The] This R.

Tyme off kyng Daudid myd the fourte age,
As I seide erst, callid it Cartage.

2008

With gret worshepe she regned in that toun,
Euer off purpos to lyue in chastite;
And round aboute floured the renoun
Off hir prudence and hir honeste.
Til the report off hir famous beute
Cam to the eris, which gladli wil nat hide,
Off a kyng that duellid ther beside.

2016

Off Musitan[e]s he was lord and sire,
As poetis pleynli list descryue,
Which in his herte gretli gan desire
The queen Dido bi hir assent to wyue,
Onto hir grace yiff he myhte aryue.
But for she hadde auowed chastite,
She neuer caste married for to be.

Dido reigned in
great prosperity
until a neigh-
bouring king
heard of her
beauty

2012

and wanted to
have her for
his wife, al-
though she had
vowed never
again to marry.

2020

The kyng supprised with loue in his corage
For hir wisdam and hir gret beute,
Sent[e] for the pryncis off Cartage,
On this mater to han a gret trete,
To condescende, yiff it myhte be,
Lich his desir, in al ther beste entent,
Doon ther deuer to make hir to consent.

2024 He sent for the
princes of Car-
thage to treat
of a marriage

2028

With his request he gan hem eek manace,
Yiff he failed off his entencioun,
Lik his desir to stonden in hir grace,
Saide he wolde been enmy to ther toun,
Tordeyne be force for ther destruccioun.
Nat fulli sobre, nor fulli in a rage,
This was to hem pleynli his language.

and threatened
to use force if
he failed in his
purpose.

2032

2036

But for thei knew hir gret[e] stedfastnesse,
And hir herte veray immutable,
Thei were affer[e]d any woord texprese,
Lest ther answeere wer nat acceptable
To his hihnesse, for he was nat tretable.
Eek in ther conceit thei gan also recorde,
To his desir the queen wold nat accorde.

The princes of
Carthage knew
that Dido
would never
break her vow,

2040

2044

2009. it] is R, H.

2017. Musicans H, R 3. 2020. The] To R.

2026. off] of al R. 2031. eek] om. R.

2033. stoden R. 2034. he] that he R — ther] the R.

2035. be force] repeated in R — for] to H, R 3.

2039. immutable R, H. 2042. he was] thei wern R.

so they tem-
porised.
Dido remained
fixed in her
purpose

With good auys an answer thei purueie
To his purpos in parti fauorable,
Afferd he wolde ther noble toun werreie,
Or off disdeyn vpon hem be vengable.
But queen Dido, in hir entent ay stable,
Caste she wolde, what-euer thei hir tolde,
Hir chast auow feithfulli to holde.

[p. 113]

2048

and told her
princes

She set a-side off this cruel kyng
His fell manacis & his woordis grete;
And to hir pryncis for ther consentyng,
Which stood in feer off that he dede hem threte,
She onto hem gaff a maner hete,
For thei wer bold tatempten or tattame
To trete off mater reboundyng to hir shame.

2052

2056

that she would
rather die than
grant the king's
demand.

"Nay, rather deie," quod she, "than tassente
To his desirs, which thyng God forbeede,
Or fro the centre off my chast entente
For to remeue, outhir in thouht or deede, —
Which were disclaundre to al womanheede,
To condescende for any manacyng
To breke my vow for plesaunce off a kyng.

2060

2064

"Be sure, he
will fail in
spite of his
threats.

Touchyng manacis maad to this cite,
For to destroie it with his gret[e] myht,
Withoute cause or title off equite
To grounden hym a quarell ageyn riht,
Onli for he is blyndid in his siht
With froward lust my chast auow tassaile,
Beth riht weel seur how he theroff shal faile.

2068

2072

"If you were
men, you
would not con-
descend to treat
with him.

Yiff ye wer bold and manli off corage,
For comoun profit your cite to defende,
And to withstonde his vicious outrage,
To trete with hym ye wold nat condescende.
But myn entent, platli to comprehende,
Wher* it to you be ioie or displeaunce,
In my promys shal be no variaunce.

2076

2057. tattame] attame H. 2058. rebowndith H.

2060. his] hir R.

2061. centre] contre H, tentre J, P; in B the c in centre is very much like a t.

2066. manacyng R. 2067. with] thoruh R — gret] om. R.

2070. blynde R. 2072. how] om. R.

2075. his] your R.

2078. Wher] Whethir B, H, J, P, R 3 — it] it be J, P — be] om. R.

My lord Sicheus, the which, alas, is ded
Onto the world[e], who[-so] list aduerte;
Trustith riht weel, for manacyng nor dreed,
That he shal neuer deien in myn herte,
Nor ye shal neuer myn auow peruerte,
Thus auysed, whil that I stonde fre,
Queen off Cartage to gouerne this cite.

2080 "For my part,
I will keep my
promise whether
it please you or
not, so long as
I am Queen of
Carthage.

2084

Myn hasti answere, I pray you nat disdeyne,
But that ye list to gyue me liberte,
With your support that I may atteyne
To haue a space graunted onto me:
This to meene, the space off monthes thre,
Mi lordis will taccompliss* off entent,
Which he whilom made in his testament."

2088 "Give me three
months in
which to exe-
cute my hus-
band's testa-
ment."

2092

Vnder colour to hir auantage
She took this space, bookis specefie,
That she myhte hir cite off Cartage
The mene while strongli fortefie
Ageyn hir enmyes, that for no slogardrie
Off them that wolde hir hih estat confounde,
Onpurueied hir cite nat be* founde.

In the mean-
time she did
fortified her city.

2096

Whan thre monthes passed were & gon,
She afftir wolde, for hir hertli plesaunce,
With sundri rihtes, many mo than on,
To all hir goddis doon sum obseruaunce,
For a special synguler remembraunce
Off hym that was, as folk shal vnderstonde,
Whilom hir lord & best beloued husbonde.

2100

After the three
months had
passed, she did
observance to
the gods

2104

And mor texalte his glorie* & his honour,
Heeld his exequies, be due reuerence,
Off al Cartage in the hiest tour,
With brennyng fir, fumys and encence,
Hir pryncis all beyng in presence;
To which she gan declare, in compleynyng,
Hir dedli sorwe, doun from hir tour lokyng.

2108 and held the
funeral rites of
her husband
with fire and in-
cense in the high-
est tower and
bade farewell to
her friends,
praying them to
report after her
death, that Dido
was married but
once.

2112

2080. the] *om.* R. 2081. who so] who H, J, P, H 5, R 3.

2084. myn auow] my vowe R. 2088. list] lust R.

2092. taccomplisshe B. 2093. whilom] sumtyme R.

2098. that] *om.* R — slugardie R, slugardye H.

2099. hih] *om.* R. 2100. be] ne B, H, R, H 5.

2101. thre] the R. 2107. Whilom] Sumtyme R.

2108. 1st his] hir B, P and MSS. except H 5 — gloire B —
2nd his] *om.* R, R 3, hir H, her P.

- "Farweel my freendis, farweel for euermore!
Onto my lord myn husbonde I mut gon, 2116
To hym, I meene, that was my lord off yore:
For off husbondis, God wot, I ha[ue] but on;
Praieng you to reporte euerichon
Afftir my deth, [how] Dido off Cartage 2120
I-ioyned was but onys in mariage.
- "Go tell the king that I am dead; his threats are in vain. Seith to the kyng, which hath* you manacid,
Mi chast[e] beute that he wolde assaile, —
Go, tellith hym how that I am pacid, 2124
And off his purpos how that he shal faile.
His manacyng shal hym nat auaille.
And seith how Dido deied for the nonys,
For she nat wolde be weddid mor than onys. 2128
- "Let him go elsewhere and choose another." Leuere I haue my liff as now to lese, [p. 114]
Rathere than soile my widwes chastite.
Lat hym go ferthere, sum other for to chese;
For in such cas he shal nat speede off me. 2132
And with the tresour off myn honeste,
Which I ha[ue] treuli obserued al my lyue,
I will departe out off this world now blyue."
- And with that she plunged a knife into her heart and ran into the fire. And into fir, that brente cleer and briht, 2136
She ran in haste, there is no mor to seyne,
Sauf with a knyff in euery manys siht
Ful sodenli she roff hir herte on tweyne.
Whos pitous deth the cite gan compleyne, 2140
Sore wepyng for wonder and for routhe,
In a woman to fynde so gret a trouthe.
- After her death they worshipped her as a goddess of chastity, and all widows wept for her sake. Afftir hir deth thei dede ther besynesne
To holde and halwe a feste funerall; 2144
Worsheped hir lik a chast goddesse,
And hir comendyn[g] in especiall
To heuenli goddis, & goddis infernall.
And widwes all[e], in ther clothes blake, 2148
At this feste weptyn for hir sake.

2120. how] *om.* J, P, R 3, H 5.2122. hath] that B, *om.* J. 2124. Go] And R.

2131. ferthere] forth R.

2132. Speede] be speedd H.

2135. will] wolde R — out departe R.

2136. fir] be fire H.

2139. on] in R. 2142. a] *om.* R.

2147. infernall] fernal R.

Touchyng Dido lat ther be no striff:
Thouh that she be accusid off Ouide,
Afftir Bochas I wrot hir chast[e] liff,
And the contrary I ha[ue] set a-side;
For me thouhte it was bet tabide
On hir goodnesse, than thyng reherse in deede,
Which myhte resowne ageyn hir womanheede.

It is true that
Ovid accuses
Dido of mis-
conducting her-
self with
Æneas, but I
follow Bochas
and write of
her chaste life
only.

To Eneas thouh she was fauourable,
To Ytaile makyng his passage,
Al that she dede, [it] was comendable,
Hym to receyue comyng be Cartage;
Thouh sum folk wern large off ther language,
Amysse texpowne be report, or texpresse
Thyng doon to hym onli off gentilesse.

It seems to me
that it is better
to speak of her
goodness than
of her failings,
and besides she
did nothing but
what was
praiseworthy.
It is always
better to speak
well than evil
of people.

Ther shal for me be maad no rehersaile
But as I fynde wretyn in Bochas;
For to sey weel may moch[e] more auaille
Than froward speche, in many dyuers cas.
But al Cartage offte seide alas,
Hir deth compleynyng thoruhout ther cite,
Which slouh hirselff tobserue hir chastite.

[¶ Lenvoy.]

O FAIR[E] Dido, most stable in thi constaunce,
Queen of Cartage, merour off hih noblesse,
Regnyng in glorie* & vertuous habundaunce,
Callid in thi tyme cheeff sours off gentilesse,
In whom was neuer founde doubilnesse,
Ay off on herte; and so thou dedest fyne,
With liht off trouthe alle widwes tenlumyne.

Fair Dido,
mirror of high
noblesse, you
died illumining
all widows with
the light of
virtue.

Chast and onchaungid in thi perseueraunce,
And inmutable founde in thi goodnesse,
Which neuer thouhtest vpon variaunce,
Force and prudence wardeyns off thi fairnesse,
I ha[ue] no language thi vertues to expresse,
Be newe report so cleerli thei [do] shyne;
With liht off trouthe alle widwes tenlumyne.

2176

Chaste and
steadfast in
your persever-
ance, your
goodness was
immutable.

2180

2184

2151. that] *om.* H. 2152. wryte R, write H.2159. it] *om.* J. 2162. report] record H. 2173. gloire B.

2179. immutable R, H, J.

2183. thei] to H — do] *om.* J, P, H 5, R 3.

Lode-star of
good behaviour,
bridling your
youth with
soberness,

O lode-sterre off al good gouernaunce,
All vicious lustis be wisdam to represse;
Thi grene youth flouryng with al plesaunce,
Thou di[d]st it bridle with vertuous sobirnesse. 2188

Diane demened so chastli thi clennesse,
Whil thou wer soul[e], pleyntli to termyne,
With liht off trouthe alle widwes tenlumyne.

and finally
dying out of
innocent purity
lest your
sureness were
jeopardised!

Thi famous bounte to put in remembraunce, 2192

Thou slouh thiselff off innocent peurnesse,
Lest thi seurnesse wer hangid in ballaunce,
Off such as cast them thi chastite toppresse —
Deth was inouh to bere theroff witnesse — 2196

Causyng thi beute to al* clennessen tenclayne,
With liht off vertu alle widwes tenlumyne.

¶ Lenvoye direct to wydowis of the translatour.¹

Noble matrons,
be sure that no
such folly as
that of Dido
enter your
hearts.

NOBLE matrones, which han al suffisaunce
Off womanhed, your wittis doth vp dresse, 2200

How that Fortune list to turne hir chaunce,
Beth nat to rakell off sodeyn hastynesse,
But ay prouideth* in your stabilnesse,
That no such foly entre your corage 2204
To folwe Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

To slay your-
selves were too
great a penance!
May God bless
and preserve
your frailty!

With hir maneris hath non aqueyntaunce, [p. 115]

Put out off mynde such foltissh wilfulnessse:
To slen yoursilff[e] wer a gret penaunce! 2208

God off his grace defende you and blesse,
And preserue your variant brotilnesse,
That your trouthe falle in non outrage,
To folwe Dido, that was queen off Cartage! 2212

Pretend all
things that
make for stead-
fastness, but
don't follow
Dido's example.

With couert colour and sobre contenaunce,
Off feithful menyng pretendith a liknesse,
Countirfetith in speche and daliaunce
Alle thyng that sowneth unto* stedfastnesse; 2216

2188. Thou] Thi R — didst] dist J, did R 3, dost P.

2189. demened] demede R. 2193. peurnesse H.

2197. to al] tal B. 2198. vertu] trewth R.

2201. to] om. H.

2203. preuideth B, J, provyd R 3, prouide P.

2206. non] nouht R. 2210. brotilnesse] Doublenesse R.

2213. The first line of the following stanza is misplaced before 2213 in H.

2216. unto] into B, R, J, P, H 5.

¹ The same heading is in MS. J. leaf 47 d.

Off prudence be gret auisenesse*
 Yoursilff restreyneth, yong & old off age,
 To folwe Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

Lat al your port be void off displesaunce;
 To gete freendis doth your besynesse,
 And beth neuer withoute purueiaunce:
 So shal ye best encresen in richesse, —
 In on alone may be no sekirnesse;
 To your herte beth dyuers off language,
 Contraire to Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

2220 Never be un-
 provided with
 fowers; there is
 no certainty in
 one alone.

2224

Hold your seruauantis vnder obeisaunce,
 Lat hem nouthur ha[ue] fredam nor largesse,
 But vnder daunger doon ther obseruaunce.
 Dauntith ther pride, them bridlyng with lownesse,
 And whan the serpent off newfangilnesse
 Assailith you, doth your auantage, —
 Contraire to Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

2228 Hold a tight
 rein and bridle
 them with hu-
 mility, and
 when the ser-
 pent of incon-
 stancy assaults
 you, be very
 different from
 Dido, who
 was queen of
 Carthage.

2232

[How vicious Sardanapalle kyng of Assirie brent
 himsilff and his tresour.]¹

OFF Assirie to rekne kynges alle
 Which hadde that lond vnder subieccioun,
 Last off echon was Sardanapalle,
 Most femynyne off condicioun,
 Wherefore Fortune hath hym throwe doun:
 And compleynyng, most ougli off maneere,
 Next afftir Dido to Bochas dede appeere.

2236 Sardanapalus,
 the last king of
 Assyria, came
 complaining in
 an ugly manner
 to Bochas.

2240

To vicious lust his liff he dede enclyne;
 Mong Assiriens, whan he his regne gan,
 Off fals vsage he was so femynyne,
 That among women vppon the rokke he span,
 In ther habite disguisid from a man.
 And off froward flesschli insolence,
 Off alle men he fledde the presence.

2244 He was vicious
 all his life, and
 so effeminate
 that he span
 amongst women
 and fled
 the presence of
 all men.

First this kyng ches to been his guide
 Moodir off vices, callid idilnesse,
 Which off custum ech vertu set aside

2248 His guide was
 idleness, the
 mother of vices,
 and that is
 why he fell.

2217. auesinesse B.

2221. gete] get yow R.

2225. hertis R.

2227. Holdith R.

2232. doth] do H.

2234. rekne] regne R.

2242. Amonge R — beganne R.

2250. ech] his R — set] settith H, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 48 recto.

In ech acourt wher she is maistresse.
Off sorwe & myscheeff the firste founderesse, 2252
Which causid onli this Sardanapall,
That to al goodnesse his wittis dede appall.

He invented
drunkenness
and riot and
feather beds,
and was a
libertine and
glutton.

He fond up first ryot and drunk[e]nesse,
Callid a fadir off lust and lecherie; 2256
Hatful off herte he was to sobirnesse,
Cherishyng surfetis, wach and glotonye,
Callid in his tyme a prynce off baudrie,
Fond rere soperis* and fether beddis soffte, 2260
Drynke late, and chaunge his wyne offte.

He loved the
odour of food
and of dirty
cooks, of spits,
ladles, and
meat hooks,
and kept com-
pany with
drunken folk.

The air off metis and off baudi cookis,
Which off custum alday roste and seede,
Sauour off spetis, ladlis & flesshookis 2264
He loued weel, and took off hem gret heede.
And folk that drank[e] mor than it was neede,
Smellyng off wyn for ther gret excesse,
With hem tabide was hooli his gladnesse. 2268

He liked to
have butchers
and fishermen
about him,
their coats
powdered with
silver-bright
scales,

He thouhte also that it dede hym good
To haue aboute hym, ageyn* skele and riht,
Boistous bocheris, al bespreynt with blood,
And watry fissheris abood euer in his siht, 2272
Ther kootis poudrid with scales siluer-briht:
Dempte ther odour, duryng al his liff,
Was to his corage best preseruatiiff.

and nothing
was so
pleasant to him
as a bawdy
house and lust-
ful, foul-
mouthed people,
who could
flatter him.

For ther nas herbe, spice, gras ne roote 2276
To hym so lusti, as was the bordelhaus,
Nor gardeyn non so holsum nor so soote
To his plesaunce nor so delicious,
As the presence off folkis lecherous; 2280
And euer glad to speke off ribaudie,
And folk cherisshe that koude flatre & lie.

Finally God
became dis-
pleased with his
scandalous be-
haviour,

Til at the laste God off veray riht
Displesid was with his condiciouns, 2284
Because he was in euery manys siht

2252. firste] cheff H, *om.* R 3. 2254. That] *om.* H, R 3.
2260. resoperis B, resopirs R, resopers J, resuppers R 3,
resowpers P.
2263. alday] ech day H.
2264. spitis ladil & Fleishokes R. 2265. gret] goode R.
2267. ther] the H. 2269. R *omits lines* 2269-4102.
2270. ageyn] with B, J.
2276. herbe] eke H — ne] nor H. 2277. as] a H.

So femynyne in his affeccions,
 And hooli gaff his inclynacions
 Duryng his liff to eueri vicious thyng,
 Terrible to heere, a[nd] namli off a kyng.

2288

But, as Bochas list to putte in mynde,
 Whan Arbachus, a prynce off gret renoun,
 Sauh off this kyng the flesshli lustis blynde,
 Made with the peeples off that regeoun
 Ageyn[e]s hym a coniuracioun,
 And to hym sente, for his mysgouernaunce,
 Off hi h disdeyn a ful pleyn diffiaunce.

[p. 116] and, as Bochas
 says, Arbaces,
 who saw his
 blind sensuality,
 2292 conspired
 against him,

Bad hym be war, & proudli to hym tolde,
 That he hym caste his vicious liff tassaile,
 And in al haste, also, that he wolde
 Withynne a feeld[e] meete hym in bataile.
 Wheroff astonyd, his herte gan to faile,
 Wher among women he sat & made gaudes,
 No wiht aboute but flatereres and baudes.

2296

bidding him
 beware and
 challenging him
 to battle.

And vp he ros, & gan hymself auauunce,
 No stuff aboute hym but sergauntis riotous;
 Took the feeld withoute gouernaunce,
 No men off armys but folkis* vicious,
 Whos aduersarie,* callid Arbachus,
 Made hym proudli the feeld to forsake,
 That lik a coward his castell he hath take.

2300

2304 Sardanapalus,
 surrounded by
 women and
 flatterers, lost
 heart, but
 made a show of
 resistance and
 then, like a
 2308 coward, fled
 to his castle,

And for his herte frowardli gan faile,
 Nat* lik a knyht, but lik a losengour,
 His riche perre, his roial appaile,
 His gold, his ieweles, vesseles & tresour
 Was brouht afor hym down [out] off a tour,
 Mid off his paleis, & gaff his men in charge
 Off cole and fagot to make a fir ful large.

2312 where he hade
 all his jewels
 and gold and
 royal garments
 be brought
 to him, and,

In which he caste his tresour and ieweles,
 Mor bestial than lik a manli man;
 And myd his riche stonys and vesseles,
 Into the fir furiousli he ran.

2316

2320 having a large
 fire kindled,
 cast everything
 into it, and
 running
 furiously into
 the flames, was
 himself burnt
 to ashes.

This tryumphe Sardanapallus wan,
 With fir consumyd for his fynal meede,
 Brent al to ashes among the coles rede.

2324

2303. aboute] about hym H. 2305. sargeauntes H.

2307. folkis] off folkis B, J, H, P, R 3, H 5.

2308. aduersaire B.

2312. Nat] I nat B, H 5. 2315. out] om. J, H, H 5, P.

Before his death
he wrote his
epitaph: "My
idleness and
vicious life
brought me to
my end."

To for his deth[e] bad men sholde write
Vpon his graue, the book doth certefie,
With lettres large, this resoun for tendite:
"Mi cursid liff, my froward glotenye,
Myn idilnesse, myn hatful lecherye,
Han causid me, with many fals desir,
My laste daies to be consumpt with fir."

2328

From this,
Princes, you
may see that
vengeance al-
ways follows
vices.

This epitaffe on his graue he sette,
To shewe how he was in al his lyue
Besi euer to hyndren and to lette
Al maner vertu, & therageyn to stryue.
Who folweth his tras is neuer lik to thryue,
For which, ye Pryncis, seeth for your auail,
Vengauce ay folweth vices at the tail.

2332

2336

¶ A comendacion of Bochas of vertuous besines
rehering names fondours of diuers sciencis &
cunnynge in prefe of Idilnes.¹

There were
others also who
delighted to live
in bestial
fashion,

THER wer eek other, þat list falsli provide
Fals flesshli lustis & dissoluciouns,
Riot, outrage, froward disdeyn & pride,
Vices tenhaunce in ther affeccions
With many onleffful croked condicions,
Resoun auoidyng, as I reherse shall,
Themsilff delityng for to be bestiall.

2340

2344

for people may
be divided into
two kinds: the
virtuous and
the vicious, and
the reputation
of both is such
as they deserve.

Tweyne maner folkis to putte in remembraunce,
Off vice and vertu, and sette a difference:
The goode alway han set ther plesauce
In vertuous labour to doon ther deligence;
And vicious peeple in slouthe & negligence.
And the report off bothen is reserued,
With laude or lak, as thei han disserued.

2348

2352

One must
praise the
industrious and
censure the
idle. So I will
call to mind
some virtuous
folk and com-
pare them with
Sardanapalus.

Men muste off riht the vertuous preferre,
And treuli preise labour and besynesse;
And ageynward, dispreisen folk that erre,
Which ha[ue] no ioie but in idilnesse.
And to compare bamaner off witnesse,
Vertuous folk I will to mynde call
In rebukyng off kyng Sardanapall.

2356

2330. Han] have H. 2332. Epitaphye H, Epitaphie P.

2335. ther ageyn to] therageyns H.

2352. have H. 2353. preferre] preserve H.

¹ The same heading is in MS. J. leaf 48 verso.

- The olde wise, callid Pictagoras,
 Be soun off hameris, auctours certefie,
 Exaample took[e], and cheeff maister was
 That fond out first musik and melodie.
 Yit off Tubal summe bookis specefie,
 That he be strok of smethis where thei stood,
 Fond first out musik tofor Noes flood.
- And Iosephus remembreth be scripture,
 That this Tubal koude forge weel,
 First ymagyned makying off armure
 With instrumentis off iren and off steel,
 And ther temprures he fond out euerideel.
 Lucyus Tarquyn, in stori as I fynde,
 Fond cheynes first, folk to fetryn & bynde.
- The childre off Seth, in story ye mai see,
 Flouryng in vertu be long successiouns,
 For to profite to ther posterite,
 Fond first the crafft off heuenli mociousns,
 Off sondri sterris the reuoluciouns;
 Bequath ther cunnyng, off gret auantage,
 To them that afftir cam off ther lynage.
- For ther vertu God gaff hem gret cunnyng,
 Touchyng natures bothe off erthe & heuene,
 And it remembrid sothli be writyng,
 To lasten ay for water or for leuene.
 Generaciouns ther wer off hem seuene,
 Which for vertu, withoute werre or striff,
 Trauailed in cunnyng duryng al ther liff.
- And for that Adam dede prophesie,
 Twies the world destroyed sholde be,
 With water onys stonde in iupartie,
 Next with fir, which no man myht[e] fle:
 But Sethis childre, as thei* dede see,
 Made too peleris wher men myhte graue,
 Fro fir & watir the carectis for to saue.
- The ton was maad off tilis hard ibake,
 Fro touch off fir to saue the scripture;
 Off hard marbil thei dede a-nother make,
 Ageyn[es] water strongli to endure,
- 2360 Pythagoras or
 Tubal invented
 music from the
 rhythm of beat-
 ing hammers.
- 2364
- [p. 117] Tubal first in-
 vented forged
 2368 armour and
 Lucius Tarquin
 chains.
- 2372
- The children of
 Seth were the
 first astron-
 omers,
 2376
- 2380
- seven genera-
 tions of them,
 who laboured in
 peace all their
 lives.
 2384
- 2388 And they made
 two pillars, one
 of tiles, the
 other of hard
 marble, upon
 which letters
 were engraved
 2392 to save them
 from destruction
 by water and
 fire.
- 2396

2371. temprures] themprures H. 2373. fettre H.
 2379. off] so H, for H 5, or P. 2383. it] it is H.
 2392. as thei] al this B, J, P, R 3. 2393. graue] save H.

They thought
that their
knowledge
would be in
vain were it
not passed on
to other men.

To saue off lettris the preent & the figure:
For ther cunnyng afforn gan so prouide,
Geyn fir & watir perpetueli tabide.

2400

Thei dempte ther cunnyng hadde be in veyn,
But folk with them hadde be partable;
And for ther labour sholde afftirward be seyn,
Thei it remembrid be writyng ful notable:
Onto-for God a thyng ful comendable,
To them that folwe, be scripture or writyng
Or that men deie departe ther cunnyng.

2404

2408

In old times
various crafts
were found for
the encourage-
ment of virtue
and the avoid-
ance of idleness.

For be old tyme folk dyuers craftis founde
In sundri wise for ocupacioun;
Vertu to cherisshe, vices to confounde,
Ther witt thei sette & ther entencioun
To putte ther labour in execucioun,
And to outrage, this is veray trouthe,
Fro manys liff negligence & slouth.

2412

Enoch invented
the Hebrew
alphabet, and
after Noah's
Flood, Cam
invented
it again,

Olde Ennok, ful famous off vertu,
Duryng that age fond first off euerichon
Thoruh his prudence lettres off Hebreu;
And in a piler thei wer kept off ston,
Til that the flood off Noe was agon.
And afftir hym, Cam was the secounde
Bi whom off Hebreu lettres wer first founde.

2416

2420

and so did
Catacrismus.
But the lettres
written by
God's hand and
given to Moses
were different.

And Catacrismus the firste was that fond
Lettres also, as off that language.
But lettres wreten with Godis owne hond
Moyses first took, most briht off his visage,
Vpon Syna as he heeld his passage,
Which off carectis & namys in sentence
From other writyng hadde a difference.

2424

2428

Afterwards
Ezra became
the fourth dis-
coverer of He-
brew lettres,
and Abraham
invented those
of Syria and
Chaldea.

Eek afftirward, as other bookis tell,
And Seyn[t] Ierom rehersith in his stile,
Vnder thempire off Zorobabell,
Esdras off Hebreu gan lettres first compile;
And Abraham, gon sithen* a gret while,
The firste was, in bookis men may see,
That fond lettres off Cire & off Caldee.

2432

2436

2399. 2nd the] *om.* H. 2413. in] & H. 2415. Fro] For J.
2421. Caame H, Cam J, R 3, P. 2431. seyn J.
2433. first] *om.* H, R 3.
2434. gon] gan J — gon sithen] gan sithe B.

Ysis in Egypt fond dyuersite
 Off sundri lettres, parted into tweyne:
 First for preestis, and for the comounte
 Vulgar lettres he dede also ordeyne.
 And Fenycys dede ther besy peyne
 Lettres off Greek to fynde in ther entent,
 Which that Cadmus first into Grece sent,

Isis made a two-fold alfaber in Egypt, and the Phoenicians discovered
 2440 Greek letters numbering seventeen, which Cadmus sent to Greece.

Which in noumbre fulli wer seuentene;
 Whan off Troye was endid the bataile,
 Pallamydes, ther language to susteene,
 Put thre therto, which gretli dede auaile.
 Pidagorus, for prudent gouernaile,
 Fond first out Y, a figur to discerne
 The liff heer short and liff that is eterne.

2444

2448

First Latyn lettres off our A. B. C.,
 Carmentis fond, off ful hih prudence.
 Grete Omerus, in Isidre ye may see,
 Fond among Grekis crafft off eloquence.
 First in Rome, be souereyn excellence,
 Off rethorik Tullius fond the flours,
 Ple and diffence off subtil oratours.

[p. 118] Latin letters were invented by Carmentis, Greek eloquence by Homer, Roman oratory by Tully.

2452

2456

Callicrates, a grauer most notable,
 Off whiht yuor dede his besynesse,
 His hand, his eye so iust wer & so stable,
 Off an ampte to graue* out the liknesse,
 Vpon the ground as Nature doth hym dresse.
 This crafft he fond, as Sardanapall
 Fond idilnesse mooder to vices all.

Callicrates carved a life-sized ant out of ivory,

2460

2464

Off a screueyn Bochas maketh menciouⁿ,
 How in a scrowe off litil quantite
 Wrot off al Troie the destruccioun,
 Folwyng Omerus be gret subtilite:
 Which among Grekis is had in gret deynte,
 Because he was founde in his writyng,
 So compendious the story rehersyng.

and Bochas mentions a scrivener who wrote the entire Iliad on a little scroll.

2468

2438. sundri] sondris H.

2440. also did H.

2450. 2nd liff] be liff H, be life R 3, the life P.

2453. ysodre H.

2457. off] & H.

2461. grauen B.

- Mirmecides* made a char also 2472
 made a chariot
 and a ship so
 small that a
 bee might cover
 them both with
 his wings.
 And a smal shipp, with al the apparaile,
 So that a bee myhte close hem bothe too
 Vnder his weengis, which is a gret meruaile —
 And nothyng seyn off al the hool entaile: 2476
 This crafft he fond off vertuous besynesse
 Teschewe the vice off froward idilnesse.
- Pan, the god of nature, first composed tunes on the flageolet, Mercury on the harp, and Bacchus discovered wine, the best of liquors.
 Pan, god off Kynde, with his pipes seuene,
 Off recorderis fond first the melodies. 2480
 And Mercurie, that sit so hih in heuene,
 First in his harpe fond sugred armonyes.
 Holsum wynes thoruhfyned from ther lyes
 Bachus fond first, of* vynes heuy lade, 2484
 Licour off licours corages for to glade.
- Perdix and Euclid invented geometry, Phoebus medicine, Albumasar astronomy, Minerva chariots, Jason seafaring,
 Perdix be cumpas fond triangle and lyne,
 And Euclid first fond geometrie,
 And Phebus fond the crafft off medicyne. 2488
 Albumasar [first] fond astronomye;
 And Mynerua gan charis first to guye.
 Iason first sailed, in story it is told,
 Toward Colchos to wyne the Flees off Gold. 2492
- Ceres agriculture, Dionysus and Bellona warfare, and Mars' son Etholus sharp spears.
 Ceres the goddesse fond first tilthe off lond;
 Dionisius tryumphes transitorie.*
 And Bellona be force first out fond
 Conquest be knythod, & in the feeld victorie. 2496
 And Martis sone, as put is in memorie,
 Callid Etholus, fond speris sharp & keene,
 To renne a werre in platis briht and sheene.
- Aristæus first used milk and curds and honey, Piroides smote fire from flints, Pallas invented weaving
 Eek Aristæus fond out the vsage 2500
 Off mylk & cruddis, & off hony soote.
 Piroides, for gret auauantage,
 Fro flyntes smet fir daryng in the roote.
 And Pallas, which that may to cold do boote, 2504
 Fond out weuyng, this is veray soth,
 Thoruh hir prudence, off al maner cloth.

2472. Mirmecides] Marmychides B, Mirmychides H, Mirmichiades R 3, Myrnychydes H 5, Mirmecides P.
 2473. al the apparaile] a trapparaile H. 2474. a bee] A B H.
 2475. a] om. H. 2480. the] om. H, R 3. 2481. sittith H.
 2484. of] on B, J, R 3. 2487. gemetrye H.
 2494. 96. transitoire, victoire B.
 2496. be] of H — &] om. H. 2497. put is repeated in H.
 2502. Purides H. 2505. weyvying H. 2506. hir] his H.

And Fido first fond out the science
 Off mesours and off proporciouns,
 And for marchantis dede his deligence
 To fynde ballaunces be iust dyuysiouns,
 Tauoide al fraude in citees & in touns
 On outh^r* parti, pleynli to compile,
 Off trewe weihte that ther wer no gile.

and Fido
 weights and
 2508 measures.

Compare in ordre cleerli all these thynges
 Founde off old tyme be diligent trauaile,
 To the plesaunce off pryncis & off kynges,
 To shewe how moch[e] cunnyng may auaille,
 And weie ageynward the froward aquitaile,
 Contrariouly how Sardanapalle
 Fond idilnesse mooder off vices alle.

Compare these
 old inventions
 with the worth-
 2516 lessness of Sar-
 danapalus, who
 only discovered
 that idleness is
 the mother of
 all vices.

Lat pryncis alle heeroff taken heed,
 What auailleth vertuous besynesse,
 And what damage the reuers doth in deed,
 Vicious liff, slouth^e and idilnesse;
 And these exaumples lat hem eek inpresse
 Amyd ther herte, and how Sardanapalle
 Fond idilnesse mooder off vices alle.

2520
 Let princes
 remember the
 advantage of
 virtuous in-
 2524 dustry and
 the damage
 done by idle-
 ness.

[¶ Lenvoy.]

NOBLE Pryncis, heer ye may weel see
 As in a me^uour, off ful cleer euydence,
 Be many exaumples mo than too or thre,
 What harm folweth off slouth^e & necligence,
 Deepe enprentying in your aduertence,
 How gret hyndryng doth wilful frowardnesse
 To your estat thoruh vicious idilnesse.

2528 Noble Princes,
 see as in a
 mirror the
 harm that
 comes from
 sloth and
 neglect.

Whan resoun faileth, and sensualite
 Holdeth the bridel off lecherous insolence,
 And sobirnesse hath lost his liberte,
 And to fals lust is doon the reuerence,
 And vice off vertu hath an apparence, —
 Misledith pryncis off wilful reklesnesse
 To gret errour off froward idilnesse.

[p. 119] When reason
 2536 fails and vice
 takes on an
 appearance of
 virtue, princes
 recklessly fall
 into idleness,

2507. Sido H. 2508. mesur^e H.
 2512. outh^r] nouth^r B. 2514. Compare] Compas H, R 3.
 2516. & off] om. H.
 2528. heer] om. H. 2532. empyrtyng H.

which has no
other reward
than sorrow
and adversity.

Ther may to slouthe non other guerdoun be,
Nor non other condigne recompense,
But sorwe, myscheeff and aduersite,
Sodeyn vengauunce and onwar violence,
Whan ye be froward in your magnyficence
To knowe the Lord and bowe be meeknesse
Tobeie his preceptis and eschewe idilnesse.

2544

2548

[How Amazias in Iuda kyng for pride and presumptioun was venquysshed in bataile & aftir slayn.]¹

As Bochas sat
musing in his
study, Amaziah
and his son
Uzziah appeared
first of a num-
ber of mighty
kings;

IN his studi as Bochas sat musyng,
With many vnkouth soleyn fantasie,
To hym appered many a myhti kyng;
And toform alle cam worthi Amazie,
His sone also, that callid was Iosie,
Off Daudis blood descendyng, as I reede,
Ech afftir othir in Iuda to succeede.

2552

and Amaziah
began to com-
plain on For-
tune, who cast
both him and
his son from
their thrones.

First Amazias compleyned on Fortune,
Causyng his greuous gret aduersites,
The traitouresse callid in comune,
These kynges tweyne castyng from ther sees;
Whos ouerturnyng from ther dignites,
Onwar fallyng, dreedful and terible,
Been ceriousli remembrid in the Bible.

2556

2560

Men may read
about their sad
end in the
Bible, so I shall
only glean out
the chief facts.

Ther pitous eende men may ther reede & see,
How Fortune ther fatis dede entrete.
Wherfore teschewe & fleen prolixite,
Al tedious thyng in this processe to lete,
And in substauce to glenen out the grete,
Off ther fallyng I purpose nat to spare
Compendiousli the causes to declare.

2564

2568

Amaziah held
the sceptre over
Judah and grew
proud

This Amazias hauyng gouernaunce
Be ful iust title off successioun,
The sceptre off Iuda, with al the hool puissaunce,

2572

2542. to] no H, P. — *This stanza is omitted in J.*

2556. First] For H.

2565. teschewe] to shewen H, to shew R 3.

2566. Al] Off J — tedious thyng] tediouste H, tediouste R 3, tediousty P.

2569. causes] cause H. 2571. off] havyng H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 49 verso.

Ful pesibli in his possessioun,
Til that pride and fals presumpcioun
Most frowardli dede his herte enbrace,
Which al attonys made hym lose his grace.

2576

In herte he hadde a maner* veynglorie,
Because that God made hym to preuaile
In his conquest and to have* victorie,
Amalechitis to venquysshe in bataile,
Eek Gabanytis, as he them dede assaile,
Purposyng[e] afftir, yiff he myhte,
With Israelitis off pride for to fyhte.

2580

and vainglorious because
God helped him
defeat the
Amalekites and
Edomites.

Onto kyng Ioas off Israel he sente,
Hym comaundyng to obeien his biddying,
And be lik subiect, as wern in ther entente,
His predecessours in al maner thyng,
Whilom to Dauid, the noble worthi kyng.
This was his sonde to Ioas, plat and pleyn,
Which bi a problem thus wrot to hym ageyn:

2584

He wanted to
fight Israel
and commanded
King Jehoash
to be subject
to him.

"The ougli thistil off the valis lowe,
Proudli presumyng aboue[n] his degre,
To make his pride openli be knowe,
Sent his message to the cedre tre,
That his sone myhte weddid be
To his douhter; al-thouh in substaunce
Atwen hem too was a gret discordaunce.

2588

2592

Jehoash answered, "The
ugly thistle of
the vale sent
to the cedar-
tree, saying,
'give thy
daughter to
my son in
marriage.' But
the wild beasts
of the forest
trode down the
thistle. Not a
leaf or even a
prick was left."

But off the forest the beestis sauagyne
In ther corages hadde theroff disdeyn.
Alle off assent fersli dede enclyne
The thistel leuys abrod vpon the pleyn,
That ther was nouthur leff nor prikke seyn."
This was the problem, which Ioas be writyng
Sent in a pistil to Amazie the kyng.

2600

2604

¶ But Iosephus in his origynal,
The said epistil, as he doth expresse,
Seith off the vale how the poudre smal
Off pride sente to the hih cipresse,
That his douhter, off excellent fairnesse,
Onto his sone, pleynli to descryue,
Myhte be delyuered & hauen hir to wyue.

2608

Josephus sub-
stitutes the
puff-ball and
cypress;

2577. maner] maner off B. 2579. have] han B.

2581. them dede] did them H.

2600. fersli] freshly H. 2611. &] to H.

and, according
to him, the
puff-ball was
cast abroad.

But a fell beeste, which that beside stood, 2612
Off cruel ire and indignacioun,
With feet disdeynnyng the pouder caste abrod
Hih in the air aboute hym enviroun.
The which example conceyued off resoun, 2616
Who that attempteth to clymben hihi alofte,
With onwar chaung his fall is ful onsoffte.

There is no
congruity be-
tween a thistle
and a cedar or
a cypress and
a puff-ball.
Royalty should
not be married
to persons of
low birth.

Atwen the cedre, off tre[e]s most roiall, [p. 120]
And a sharp thistil is no conveyence, 2620
Nor twen a cipresse, statli* founde att all,
And lothsum pouder is a gret difference:
For roial blood sholde ha[ue] non assistance
To be ioyned nor knet in mariage 2624
With such as been brouht forth off low parage.

The thistle, al-
though it has
some good
qualities, also
has pricks as
sharp as a
spine.

The cedre is strong & myhti off substaunce,
In his vpgrowyng riht as any lyne;
And thouh the thistil ha[ue] spottis off plesaunce, 2628
He hath eek prikkis, sharp as any spyne.
And bothe naturis, pleynli to termyne,
The cedre off kynde, who looke[th] weel aboute,
To no thistil* sholde his braunchis loute. 2632

The cypress is
fragrant, but a
puff-ball
troubles the air
with dust and
gets in people's
eyes.

Holsum off odour is the fair cipresse,
As bookis telle, and vertuous off kynde;
Dust & pouder, pleynli to expresse,
Troubleth the air & maketh folkis blynde: 2636
For which in spousaile conveyence to fynde,
Lat estatys off ther berthe honourable,
Voide al raskail & wedde ther semblable.

Honourable
estates should
avoid rabble.
Amaziah lost
his temper, and
made war on
Jehoash; but
his men ran
away

But Amazias wolde nat be war 2640
For no warnyng, nor for no prophecie,
But stille in herte gret hatrede [he] bar
Ageyn kyng Ioas, off malice & envie;
Into a* feld brouht al his cheualrie, 2644
Gadred them out, bothe nyh and ferre,
Geyn Godis will on hym to gynne a werre.

2621. twen] atween H — statli] estatly B, estatly J.
2623. For] Full H — sholde] shal H.
2629. He] & H.
2632. thistil] thouthistil B, H, thouththistil J, thouthystyl H 5,
thistill R 3, thistle P.
2636. air] day H.
2639. al] of H.
2642. he] om. J.
2644. a] the B. 2646. on] geyn H.

And kyng Ioas, ful lik a worthi knyht,
 Into the feeld[e] faste gan hym speede;
 And alle the knyhtis off Iuda anon riht
 Wer smet off vengauunce with a sodeyn dreede —
 To bidde hem fle, God wot, it was no neede,
 And Amazias, for al his gret[e] pride,
 Stood destitut and no man be his side.

2648 and Jehoash
 captured him

With hym was non lefft off al his meyne,
 So God and Ioas ageyn hym wrouhte.
 Off Ierusalem entred the cite,
 And Amazie off force with hym he brouhte;
 And in the temple the tresour out he souhte,
 Gold and siluer, and hooli ther richesse;
 And to Samarie hom he gan hym dresse.

2652 and took all
 the treasure of
 the temple to
 Samaria.

And Amazias he leet out off prisoun,
 Afftir al this, and suffred hym go fre.
 To his myscheeff and his confusioun,
 He was delyuered from his captiuite;
 For slayn he was in Lachis the cite,
 Among his freendis be symulacioun,
 His deth conspired vnder ful fals tresoun.

2660 Afterwards he
 set Amaziah
 free, and
 Amaziah was
 soon after-
 ward slain in
 Lachish.

[How god vpon Iosias succedyng kyng next in Iuda
 toke vengauunce/ smot him with lepre.]¹

AFFTIR in Iuda, the myhti regioun,
 Next Amazias, Iosias gan succede,
 Wonder manli & famous of renoun,
 In alle his werkis ful prouident in deede.
 And off his knythod venquissid, as I reede,
 The Palestynes, for al ther gret puissance,
 With al Arabie he brouht onto vttraunce.

2668 After Amaziah,
 Uziah suc-
 ceeded, manly
 and famous.

Bilte touns and many strong cite,
 And onto Egipt he his boundis sette;
 Made castelis beside the Rede Se,
 And in his conquest, whom that euer he mette,
 Off manli pride he ne wolde lette —
 I meene alle tho that were his aduersaires —
 To his lordshepe to make hem tributaires.

2672

2676 He defeated the
 Palestines, con-
 quered Arabia
 and built towns
 and castles.

2680

2658. 2nd the] om. H.

2674. vttraunce] myschaunce H.

2681. his] his gret H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 50 recto.

He also rebuilt
Jerusalem,
strengthening
its defences,

He dede his labour also to repare
Ierusalem afftir his ruyne;
The wallis rered, which on the soil lay bare, 2684
Made newe tour[e]s, riht as any lyne,
Fany's off gold ther torettis tenlumyne,
And tafforce hem, leet werkmen vndertake
Squar bastiles & bolwerkis to make. 2688

and planted
gardens and
vineyards and
grafted trees.

He delited to make fressh gardynes,
Dyuers greynes & herbis for to knowe,
Rzioisshid to plante sundri vynes,
To griffe trees and seedis for to sowe, 2692
And straunge frutis [to] make hem growe arowe.
And with hym hadde, his enmyes to encoumbre,
Thre hundrid thousand manli men in noumbre.

He became very
much dreaded
for his bravery,
and finally
grew proud

His noble fame gan to sprede wide, 2696
And gret[elli] drad for his hih prowesse,
Wherthoruh his herte corrupt was with pride,
Because onli off his gret richesse;
And frowardli he dede his besynesse 2700
For to maligne in his estat roial
Ageyn the Lord, the which is immortal.

and obstinate
to God.

To God aboute he gan wexe obstynat, [p. 121]
That be processe ful smal he dede wyne; 2704
And sauour cauhte in his roial estat
To folwe his fader in onthrif & synne,
That grace and vertu from hym dede twynne.
In most shynyng off his magnyficence, 2708
Fortune proudli assailed his excellence.

So Fortune de-
cided to assail
him, especially
when he
dressed up like
a bishop out of
pure wanton-
ness and
started to
sacrifice in the
temple, which
vexed

Caste she wolde withynne a litil while
His surquedie & froward pride assaile,
And ful onwarli deceyue hym and begile, 2712
To make his power tappallyn & to faile,
Whan that this kyng took on thapparaille
Off a bisshop, off veray frowardnesse,
And into temple proudli gan hym dresse, 2716

Beyng in purpos, on a solempne day,
To take his way up to the hih auter,
Falsli vsurpyng, who-euer seide nay,

2692. griffe] grift H, grift R 3, graffe P — seede H.

2693. to] om. P.

2697. hih] om. J. 2702. 2nd the] om. H.

2706. &] & in H, R 3. 2714. that] om. H, R 3.

To sacrefie, holdyng the censer,
 To for the auter, that shon of gold ful cleer.
 For which offence, the Bible seith the same,
 Azarias the bisshop dede hym blame.

Gan withstonde hym in the face anon,
 Four score preestis beyng in presence,
 Off the kynrede descendid off Aaron,
 Which forbad hym & made resistence,
 That with his hand he sholde putte incence
 Vpon the auter, ageyn[es] Godis lawe,
 Hym chargyng boldli his presence to withdrawe.

But off despiht he made them holde ther pes,
 In payne off deth began hem to manace;
 And sodenli among[es] al the pres,
 An erthequaue fill in the same place.
 And therewithal in the kynges face,
 Off the sonne ther smet a bem so briht,
 That al his visage was scorkid with the liht.

He wex a lepre, ful foul and riht horrible
 For his offence, as God list ordeyne;
 To euery man off look he was terrible,
 And but fewe his myscheeff gan compleyne.
 And a gret hill the same hour karff on tweyne,
 Nat ferr a-side from the tou[n] withoute,
 Cites destroieng that stood round aboute.

On kyng Iosie God took his vengau[n]ce,
 For al his lordshepe & his magnyficence,
 To punyshe his pride & his froward puissaunce,
 And brouht hym lowe for his gret offence:
 For his persone was put out off presence
 Perpetueli, as Hooli Writ can telle,
 Fer from al peep[le] with lepres for to duelle.

His flessch was troubled with dyuers passiouns,
 For his siknesse auoided the cite;
 In cri and sorwe and lamentaciouns
 His liif he ladde, in gret aduersite.
 And so he deied in sorwe and pouerte,
 Sympli buried, for al his grete myht,
 Withynne an iland that stood ferr out of siht.

2720

2724 Bishop Azariah
 who, with his
 eighty priests
 behind him,
 ordered Uziah
 off the premises.

2728

But Uziah
 told them to
 hold their
 tongues, and
 suddenly there
 was an earth-
 quake, and the
 king's face was
 scorched by a
 ray of the sun
 and he became
 a leper, and a
 hill split in
 two and de-
 stroyed cities.
 Thus God took
 his vengeance.

2740

2744

Uziah was
 cast down from
 his throne and
 sent to a leazar
 house; and
 when he died
 he was buried
 without cere-
 mony in an
 island.

2748

2752

2756

2720. sacrefie] sacrifice H, sacrifice R 3, P. 2721. shon] om. H.

2722. be which H.

2730. boldli] proudly H.

2732. he be gan H.

2737. visage] face P — scorched P.

2742. the] þat H.

2758. stood ferr] ferr was H.

¶ An exortacion to Princis to be auisid to do ageyn goddis Preceptes.¹

Let princes be careful not to offend God; for unless they repent they will suffer for it.

LAT pryncis all[e] in ther prouidence
Be riht weel war any thyng tattame, 2760
Which onto God sholde been offence,
List that the fyn conclude to ther shame.
Lat them thynke, for al ther noble fame,
But thei repente, God off his iustise 2764
Ther froward pride onwarli will chastise.

And let them not meddle with the affairs of the church. God will not permit that.

Lat hem be war off malice to presume
Ageyn his cherche to doon offencioun;
For God off riht all tirantis will consume 2768
In ful short tyme for ther presumpcioun.
Which wil nat suffre ther dominacioun
To interupte, for al ther grete myht,
Nor breke the fraunchise off hooli cherches ryht. 2772

Let Uziah's example teach prudent princes to do due reverence to holy church.

To prudent pryncis, which that can discern,
Lat kyng Iosias, considred his offence,
Been in ther mynde a merour & lanterne,
To hooli cherche to do due reuerence; 2776
And conceyue in ther magnificence,
God will off riht, be thei neuer so stronge,
Chastise ther malice, thouh he abide longe.

[How kyng Ozie was taken bi kyng Salmanazar and deied in prisoun.]²

Another king, called Hoshea, was taken by Shalmaneser and led captive into Assyria.

THER was a-nother, that callid was
Ozie, [p. 122] 2780
Which whilom regned, as I afferme dar,
In Israel, whom Fortune be envie
Made hym be take or that he was war,
Besegid aboute off kyng Salmanazar; 2784
And in Tassirie vnder his daunger,
The Bible tellith, he was prisoner.

His towns were destroyed, his people enslaved, and Hoshea died of grief.

His cites, touns brouht to destruccioun,
And al his peeple vnder long seruage 2788
Wer take and kept in strong[e] Babiloun,

2772. chirch H. 2783. that] om. H.

2785. vn to Assyrye H, in to Assirie J, R, 3, into Assirie P, in Tassyrye H 5.

¹ The same heading in MS. J. leaf 50 verso.

² MS. J. leaf 50 verso.

Suffred ther gret peyne & gret damage.
And in a presoun, be furious outrage,
This said Ozias, in cheynes bounde sore,
For sorwe deide: off hym write I no more.

2792

[How Senacheryb kyng of Assirie was slayne.]¹

WITH these forsaid woful kynges thre,
Senacherib, off Assirie kyng,
Cam to Iohn Bochas, most ougli on to see,
Ful pitousli his fate compleynnyng.
And speciali his onwar chaungyng
He gan bewaile, oppressid in his thouht,
From hih noblesse how he was brouht to nouht. 2800

2796 Senacherib,
ugly to look
upon, com-
plained how he
was brought to
nought.

His renoun spradde thoruh many dyuers rewme,
And peeplis all[e] gan hym magnefie;
A siege he laide onto Ierusalem,
In the tyme off kyng Sedechie.
But in his most froward surquedie,
Godis aungel tofor the cite
An hundrid thousand slouh off his meyne.

His renown
was great, and
he laid siege
to Jerusalem,
but God's
angel slew his
men 2804

And the mor to maken hym afferd,
Mid off his peeple, the silue same nyht,
Godis aungel shooff away his berd
With a sharp suerd that shon cleer & bryht.
Lefte his siege & took hym onto flyht;
And in a temple, his goddis worshepyng,
His sonys slouh hym as he sat knelyng.

2808 and shaved
his beard, which
so terrified him
that he ran
away and was
afterward slain
by his sons.

2812

[How kyng Sedechie/ for fals forsweryng was slayn
and made blynde in prisoun.]²

TOUCHYNG the compleynt of kyng Sedechie,
And off his sorwes to shewe the maner,
Hooli Writ dooth cleerli. specefie,
Wherfore it were but veyn to telle hem heer.
For ther men may the processe pleyln ler,
How Ioachym, kyng off Ierusalem,
His owne brother, was lad out off his rewme.

2816 Zedekiah's story
is told in the
Bible.
His brother
Jehoiachin and
his wife and
children were
taken captive
by
2820

2794. With] And with H, R 3, H 5.

2802. peeple H, peple R 3, pepyll H 5 — peeplis all] all people

P. 2812. onto] to be H.

2819. men] ye H — may] om. J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 50 verso.

² MS. J. leaf 51 recto.

Nebuchad-
nezzar, which
grieved
Zedekiah.

Wheroff in herte he felte ful gret sor,
This Sedechias, as it is ther founde,
Because the kyng Nabugodonosor
His brother heeld, strong in prisoun bounde,
Fulli in purpos the Iewes to confounde;
For this tirant hadde in that mortal striff
His brethre, childre in prisoun, & his wiff.

2824

2828

But when
Nebuchad-
nezzar restored
him to his throne
on condition
of paying a
yearly tribute
to the
Babylonians,
he became
so elated
that he

And yit this tirant in his tyrannye
This fauour dede in al his fell[e] rage
Onto this moste woful Sedechie,
To suffre hym regne in his gret[e] age,
Fro yeer to yeer to paie hym a truage,
Be feith and oth and composicioun,
Reised off his peeple & brouht to Babiloun.

2832

forgot his
brother and
his friends,

Yit Sedechias in especiall,
Be a maner off fals felicite,
Hymselff reioished in his see roiall
To ocupe that noble dignite,
And so forgat the gret aduersite
Off his brother and other freendis all,
Touchyng the myscheeff that thei wer in fall.

2836

2840

and soon
decided that he
would not pay
his tribute any
longer.

Off pride he fill into presumpcioun,
Whan he remembrid his brethre & his lynage,
Considred how fro kyng Salamoun
He was descendid be tittle off heritage,
Gan disdeyne to paien his truage,
And to maligne, in herte he was so wroth,
And falsli brak his suraunce and his oth.

2844

2848

He thought to
himself,
"Solomon paid
no tribute;
tribute was paid
to him: why
should I do it?"

He hadde a maner indignacioun,
Which he cauhte off old remembraunce,
How tyme passid, to kyng Salamoun,
Be his manli prudent gouernaunce,
Kynges aboute for a recognisaunce
Paied tribut, and durst it nat withseie
Fro yeer to yeer his noblesse to obeie.

2852

2856

So he rebelled
against the king
of Babylon,

Which thyng remembrid off kyng Sedechie,
As he wex gret and strong in his puissaunce,
Off hih disdeyn his tribut gan denye,

2828. brethre] brothir H, brother H 5, brethern P — children P.

2830. his] this H. 2832. hym] hem H.

2838. reioysshying H. 2844. 2nd his] om. H.

Sette a-side his feith and assuraunce,
 So that his oth stood in no substaunce;
 For he ageyn the kyng off Babiloun
 Presumptuousli fill in rebelloun.

2860

And his kyngdam to strengthe & fortefe, [p. 123]
 Thouhte he wolde to his auantage
 The kyng off Egipt haue on his partie,
 Off pride he fill into so gret outrage,
 That he no mor wolde paien his truage;
 But fynali such weies he hath souht,
 That off his oth lital he rouhte or nouht.

2864 and, allying himself with the king of Egypt, went back on his promised word,

2868

But O alas, it is a doolful thyng
 To be remembred, in hih or low degre,
 That any prynce or any worthi kyng
 Sholde false his oth or ontrew be;
 Or that men sholde such variaunce see
 In ther corages, which been so hih[e] born,
 For any cause falsli to be forsworn.

2872 which is a shameful thing for any prince or king to do.

2876

Be report it doth ther fame trouble,
 Infortuneth and clipseth ther noblesse,
 Whan a prynce is off his heste double,
 And chargith nat, off wilful reclesnesse,
 Al-be his promys conclude on doubilnesse.
 Thouh God a while suffre hem and respite,
 At onset hour ther falsnesse he will quite.

2880 It injures their good name and eclipses their noblesse, and God is sure to punish them for it.

2884

His warnyng ofte he sent to them affor,
 Because thei lacke prudent policie,
 Record I take off Nabugodonosor,
 Which cam onwarli on kyng Sedechie,
 For he his tribut gan falsli hym denye;
 With al his power, as he dede abraide,
 To Ierusalem a myhti siege he laide.

2888 The result was, that Nebuchadnezzar suddenly descended on Zedekiah,

Thei withynne constreyned were off neede,
 The kyng hymself, ther was no bett diffence,
 With manys flessch his peple for to feede,
 Whil the Caldeies be myhti violence,
 Off verai force, withoute resistance,
 On fals forsweryng for to taken wrake,
 Ther myhti tour[e]s and ther wallis brake.

2892 laid siege to Jerusalem, starved the Jews into eating one another, destroyed the city and killed most of the people.

2896

2879. Infortunatith R 3 — eclipsith H, R 3.

2888. on] vpon H. 2894. peeplis H.

Zedekiah was
put in chains,
his children slain,
his wives
handed over to
strangers and
his eyes rent out.

To slen and kille thei list non for to spare,
Whom-euer thei mette or cam in ther siht; 2900

Sedechias leffte the toun al bare,
But take he was, as he hym took to fliht,
In cheynys bounde and fetrid anon riht,
In whose presence, tencrece his peynes anon, 2904
His yonge childre were slay[e]n euerichon.

His wyues all, most woful off ther cheres,
Which in ther tyme most goodli were and fair,
Delyuered wern in handis off straungeres; 2908
And mor, alas, to putte hym in dispair,
Into his kyngdam neuer to ha[ue] repair,
With sharp[e] tonges, it was to gret a payne,
Out off his hed wer rent his eien tweyne. 2912

His city
Jerusalem was
burnt to the
ground, his
treasure sent to
Babylon, and he
died miserably
in prison.

Off Ierusalem his cite was ibrent
Pleyn to* the ground into ashes dede.
His gret riches, his tresour hooli sent
To Babiloun, with stonys bleu and rede; 2916
Vesselis off gold, which richest wer in deede,
Withoute merci or remissioun,
Caldeies took to ther possessioun.

That is what
perjury leads to.

And thus in sorwe and in wrechidnesse 2920
He deied, alas, fetred in prisoun.
Loo, heer the eende off periurie & falsnesse!
Loo, how Fortune can turnen vp-so-doun
Off mortal men the condicioun: 2924
Now richest shynyng in* prosperite,
With onwar chaung to hatful pouerte.

What do royal
thrones avail
people who are
not secure in
them?

Now men lefft up to roial dignites,
Now hih aloffte be fulsum habundaunce: 2928
But what auaieth to sitte in roial sees
To folk that han therin non assuraunce,
Namli whan Fortune holdeth the balaunce,
Which ay off custum onto hih estatis 2932
Hath a fals ioie to shewen hir chekmatis.

Amaziah fell,
Uzziah became
a leper, Zedekiah
died in prison.

Record I take off pryncis mo than on,
Ther woful fatis hanging in iupartie, 2936
Remembrid late, and among echon

2904. peyn H.

2913. ibrent] brent J.

2914. to] into B, J, H, P, H 5 — the] om. H 5.

2925. in] in hih B, J, in hygh H 5. 2930. have H.

2935. hangyng] havyng H.

The woful fal off kyng Amazie,
His sone eek lepre, which callid was Iosie,
And last off all[e], how in Babiloun,
Kyng Sedechias deied in prisoun.

2940

¶ *Lenvoye.*

NOBLE Pryncis, considreth the fallas
Off Fortunys froward flat[e]rie;
Seeth hir deceites in many dyuers cas,
How she first mokkid manli Amazie,
Which slay[e]n was for his surquedie
To yeue you warnyng, bexauple as ye may reede,
Whan ye sit hiest, your fal is most to dreede.

2944

Noble Princes,
when you sit
highest, then is
your fall most to
be dreaded.

And as it is remembred* in Bochas, [p. 124]
Eek in the Bible off the kyng Iosie,
In his tyme how famous that he was
Bothe off richesse and off cheualrie,
Punshed with lepre, bookis specefie,
For his presumyng: remembrith this in deede,
Whan ye sit hiest, your fal is most to dreede.

2948

Remember how
Uzziah was pun-
ished for his
presumption,

2952

Al worldli glorie* fleeth hens a gret[e] pas,
I take witenesse off kyng Sedechie;
For fals forsweryng he slay[e]n was, alas!
Maad blynd in prisoun; this story cannat lie.
Thus sheweth Fortune, thoruh hir froward envie,
To you, Pryncis, yif ye list taken heede,
Whan ye sit hiest, your fal is most to dreede.

2956

and how King
Zedekiah was
slain for
forswearing.

2960

[How kyng Astriages labored to disherite Cirus/ but
god suffrid his malice not to preuaile.]¹

AFFTIR these kynges, on folwed in the pres,
And gan to Bochas his compleynt discure;
And he was callid the g^rete Astriages,
Which tolde in ordre his vnkouth auenture,
Lord off Asie, as bookis us assure,
And hadde off tresour duryng al his liff
A-boue alle kynges a prerogatiff.

2964

After these
kings followed
Astyages, the
richest prince of
his time.

2968

2948. is remembred] remembreth B, remembrith J, H 5.

2949. 2nd the] om. H.

2963. to discure H.

2955. gloire B.

2958. this] his H.

2964. Astiages P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 51 verso.

He lacked
nothing but a
male heir,

Most fortunat in al his gouernaile,
Felte off Fortune non aduersite,
Sauf an heir male, nothyng dede hym faile;
For he most glorious sat in his roial see: 2972
Off worldli welthe he lakked no plente,
Except onli, as clerkis off hym write,
He hadde no sone his kyngdam tenherite,

and once dreamt
of a vine that
grew, and a
stream of water,
clear as beryl,
that arose, in his
daughter
Mandane's
womb, both
spreading over
all Asia,

Which to his welthe was gret disencres, 2976
Lest successioun failed in his lyne.
A douhter had he callid Mundanes,
Out off whos wombe, as bookis determyne,
He drempte a-nyht[e] how he sauh a vyne 2980
In his auesioun, with hym so it stood,
Ouer al Asie his braunchis spredde abrod.

He hadde also a reuelacioun,
Slepyng a-nyht[e] afftir his souper, 2984
Thouh he nat knew thexposicioun,
He thouhte he sauh a cristallyn ryuer,
With lusti watris, as any berell cleer,
Out off hir wombe, with his stremys fressh 2988
The soil of Asie make tendre and nessh.

and could not
understand what
it meant,

Touchyng this reuer and this lusty vyne
To hym shewed in his auisioun,
Withynne hymself he coud[e] nat termyne, 2992
Theroff to fynde no cleer conclusioun
Withoute sum maner exposicioun
To hym declared be folkis in sentence,
Which off such dremys hadde experience. 2996

until his
philosophers and
diviners

To hym he callid his astronomeris,
His philisophres and his dyuynours,
That knew the meuyng off the nyne speeris,
Ymages off sterris, ther houses & ther tours; 3000
And such as wern expert expositours.
And whan thei wern assemblid euerichon,
Touchyng his drem thei corded all in on.

told him that his
daughter would
have a son, by
whom one day
he would be put
out of his king-
dom. This was
to be his fate.

To telle hym trouthe thei wer nat rec[e]lles, — 3004
Saide his douhter, fro whom ther cam a vyne,
She that be name was callid Mundanes,
Sholde haue a sone descendyng from his lyne,
Whos noble fame thoruh Asia sholde shyne, 3008
Which sholde [hym] putte, thoruh his hih renoun,
Be* force off armys out off his regioun.

3009. hym] om. J — hym putte] pull hym H.

3110. Be] Hym be B, J — armys] hys armes P.

This was his fate; he myhte it nat refuse,
The heuenli cours but it dede faile.

3012 Whereupon he
thought he
would try to
avoid it,

Whereupon he sore gan to muse,
Such fantasies dede his herte assaile;
Fill in gret doubte off ther dyuynaile,
Thouhte he wolde make purueiaunce
For to withstonde Godis ordenaunce.

3016

Ful hard it is to make resistance
Geyn thyng ordeyned, whan God will that it be;
And namli ther, wher as influence
Off heuene aboue hath shape a destyne:
Sum men recorde that no man may it fle.
The doom off this, wher that it holde or flitte,
Tastronomeris al hooli I committe.

3020 although men
say that no one
may escape his
destiny.

3024

This said[e] kyng, off whom I spak but late,
Caste he wolde, for his auantage,
The ordenaunce reuersen and the fate
Off the heuene, with al the surplusage,
And yeue his douhter as in mariage
To sum onworthi poore infortunat
That neuer were likli to rise to hih estat.

3028 So the king
determined
to give his
daughter to
some poor, un-
distinguished
man,

And in this wise, kyng Astriages [p. 125]
Maried his douhter, as in his entent,
To on onworthi callid. Cambises,
Deemyng therbi, be short auysement,
Withynne hymselff that he was riht prudent,
Wenyng that noblesse cam be discent off blood,
And nat be grace, nor as the heuene stood.

3032 and married her
to an unworthy
named Cam-
byses. He
thought nobility
came by blood
and not by
3036 grace, and
forgot about
such men as
Socrates, who
possessed all
moral virtue,

In his resoun was nat comprehendid,
How Socrates, maistir off Platoun,
Off ful low bed bi berthe was descendid,
And nat tenherite kyngdam nor regioun,
But for to haue fulli possessioun
Off moral vertu and philosophie,
Duryng his liff his witt he dede applie.

3040

3044

He souhte contrees for wisdom and science,
And secre cunnynge to serch[e] dede his peyne;
And he fond out thoruh his deligence,

3048 discovered that
the soul was
immortal,

3012. faile] falle H.

3022. men] om. H.

3031. likli] like H.

3025. saide] same H.

3041. bi berthe] om. H.

This philisophre, as bookis acerteine,
 To ioie reserued outhur onto peyne,
 Be grace off God, which is eternall,
 How menyis soulis be founde ay inmortal. 3052

and was judged
 by Apollo to be
 the wisest
 philosopher of
 his time,

The grete Appollo, in bookis it is founde,
 Gaff iugement off equite and riht,
 That Socrates in vertu most habounde,
 And most preferrid in eueri manys siht, 3056
 Was callid off wisdam the lanterne & the liht,
 And wisest named, at evyn and at pryme,
 Off philisophres that wer in his tyme.

and Euripides,
 who was called
 most honourable
 (although his
 mother was
 vicious) and
 wrote many
 tragedies and
 told the truth
 to all.

The poete also callid Euripides, 3060
 Most honourable callid in that age,
 Al-be his mooder off liif was rec[el]les
 And contagious thoruh vicious outrage:
 Yit was this poete, for al his vil lynage, 3064
 Most vertuous founden at assaies,
 Off alle poetis that wer in his daies.

Callid in his tyme a gret tragician,
 Because he wrot many tragedies, 3068
 And wolde off trouthe spare no maner man,
 But hem rebuken in his poetries,
 Touchyng the vices off fleshli fantasies,
 Compleyne in pryncis ther deedis most horrible, 3072
 And ech thyng punshe that was to God odible.

Demosthenes,
 greatest of
 rhetoricians,
 was born a poor
 man, yet he was
 the most
 eloquent.

A-nother clerk callid Demostenes,
 The moste subtil rethorician,
 And most inuentiff among al the pres, 3076
 That euer was sithe[n] the world began,
 Al-be off berthe he was a poore man,
 Yit hadde he most souereyn excellence
 Mong philisophres off speche & eloquence. 3080

So it would seem
 that royal blood
 and high lineage
 are of but small
 advantage with-
 out the grace of
 God.

Be which exaample, me semeth dout[e]lles,
 That roial blood, nouthur hilt lynage
 To mennys berthe yeueth but smal encres, 3084
 Nor onto vertu but litil auauantage:
 For hih noblesse taketh nat his corage
 Off riche nor poore, nor statis souereyne,
 But off his grace, as God list to ordeyne.

3056. eueri] any H.

3073. punysh H, punnysh R 3, punysshed H 5, punishe P.

3074. Domestenes J. 3082. nouthur] nor J, P.

Wherefore, off foli kyng Astriages,
 Contrariouli ageyn al gent[e]rie,
 Bad that his douhter callid Mundanes,
 First whan folk with childe hir dede espie,
 For tacomplishe his froward fantasie,
 Whan it wer born, charging aboue all thyng,
 Off Archanye to bern it to the kyng.

3088 Astyages was
 foolish and not
 a gentleman, for
 he commanded
 Mandane's new-
 born child to be
 taken to Har-
 pagus to be cast
 out to wild
 brasts.

Which in that tyme was callid Arpagus;
 And, as I fynde, he dede in vertu floure,
 And pite* hadde, the story tellich thus,
 That beestis sholde the litil child deuoure.
 But God that may in myscheeff best socoure,
 To keepe the child was nat rek[e]lles,
 Ageyn the malice off kyng Astriages,

3096

Which hadde comaundid off malice & hatreede,
 How that this child, greene & tendre off age,
 Bi Arpagus sholde be cast in deede
 To be deuoured off beestis most sauage.
 But for he dradde to doon so gret outrage,
 To his shepperde, hymselff to stonde at large,
 The child to slen he fulli gaff the charge.

3100

But Harpagus
 was afraid to
 put the child to
 death and told
 his shepherd to
 do it.

3104

3108

[How yong Cirus was in to the Forest/ cast with
 bestys to be deuoured.]¹

THIS heerdeman, albe that he was loth
 To execute this woful auenture,
 Inta forest foorth with the child he goth,
 And gaff to beestis that litil creature;
 Whom to fostre, be grace ageyn nature,
 A wilde bichche hir whelpis ther forsook,
 And to hir pappis the litil child she took.

The shepherd,
 although un-
 willing, took the
 child into a
 forest, where it
 was suckled by
 a wild bitch.

3112

And with hir mylk she made hym suppe &
 dyne,

[p. 126]

And bisi was fro* hym to enchace
 Wilde foulis and beestis sauagyne,

Behold how God
 can preserve in-
 nocents from
 injury!

3116

3091. did hir H.

3094. Hircanye P. 3095. Harpagus P.

3097. pite] spiht B, J, spyte P.

3102. hadde] om. H. 3108. 2nd the] in H.

3111. Inta] In to a H, J, R 3, H 5, P.

3117. fro] for B, H, H 5. 3118. bestis & foulis H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 52 recto, *in margin*.

- That non ne durste neihhen to that place.
 Loo, how that God disposen can his grace,
 Innocentis fro myscheeff to preserue 3120
 Geyn fals envie, which wolde make hem sterue!

O unkind blood,
unnatural and
full of hatred, to
murder a child
on whom even
beasts have
pity! O blood onkynde, founden in kynreede,
 For couetise, O blood disnaturall 3124
 Off fals malice, O blood ful off hatreede! —
 To moordre a child born off the stok roiall!
 Wher manys resoun is turned bestiall,
 Falsli transfourmed onto cruelte, 3128
 To slen a child wher beestis han pite!

The simple
herdsman told
his wife about
the child, and
she went with
him to the forest
to see it, and
took it in her
arms The celi heerde hath told his wiff the cas;
 And she anon off pite dede arise,
 With hir husbonde wente a ful gret pas 3132
 Into the forest, beholdyng al the guise,
 As heer-tofor[e]n ye han herd deuyse,
 Seyng the child, with lippis tendre & soffte,
 The bichchis pappis how he sok ful offte. 3136

The said[e] heerde callid Sparagos,
 His wiff also, off whom toforn I tolde,
 This yonge child took in ther depous;
 And in hir armys she sofftli gan it folde. 3140
 And he ful goodli hir face gan beholde,
 And on his maner in the same while,
 In childli wise on hir gan to smyle.

and fed it,
although the
wild bitch stood
angrily at bay The childes lauhtre whan she dede aduerte,
 With al hir hool[e] feithful dilligence 3144
 She gan to cherishe it, and with al hir herte
 She gaff it souk, with ful gret teuerence,
 Albe the bichche made resistance, 3148
 Compleynyng stood felli at abay,
 The litil child whan she sauh lad away.

and howled
when she carried
it home with her Ful pitousli she gan to houke and crie,
 At ther departyng doolfully compleyne, 3152
 And afftir them ful faste gan to hie,
 The child to lete she felte so gret a peyne.
 Loo, how that God off merci can ordeyne
 A cruel beeste such sorwe for to make, 3156
 And so to mourne for a childes sake!

But eueri thyng that God will ha[ue] preserued,
 Ne may nat faile to stonde in sekirnesse.
 His secre doomys been to hymselff reserued;
 Ther can no man expowne hem, as I gesse.
 For he shoop first that this shepperdesse,
 Off Sparagos the trewe poore wiff,
 For to be mene to saue the childes liff.

3160 What God
 wishes preserved
 is safe. God
 saw to it that
 the shepherdess
 rescued the
 child out of the
 goodness of
 her heart.

Hom to hir hous the child she ladde anon,
 And it to fostre dede hir besynesse:
 Off othir salari, God wot, knew she non,
 Sauff that hir herte therto dede hir dresse.
 And mor enterli, the story berth witnesse,
 She tendrid hym, and with mor besi cure,
 Than hym that was hir child born off nature.

3164 She cared for
 him better than
 if he had been
 her own.

And as the story pleynli doth expresse,
 This yonge child, as he wex in age,
 Fro day to day encreced in noblesse,
 Lik for to been riht manli off corage.
 Cirus callid he was in that language,
 To seyne in Latyn pleynli in substaunce,
 A man iborn to gret enheritaunce.

3172 They named
 him Cyrus,
 which means in
 Latin a man
 born to great
 inheritance.

And whan the renoun off his excellence
 Bi long processe, and off his gret ences
 Cam be report onto the audience
 Off his aiel, the grete Astriages,
 And how the kyng was founde rech[e]lles,
 Callid Arpagus, for to do vengauce
 On yonge Cirus, he fill in displesaunce.

3176

3180 When Astyages
 heard of all
 this, he was
 furious with
 Harpagus

This is to meene Astriages was wroth,
 That Arpagus was founde merciable
 Cirus to saue, and for that he was loth
 Ageyn[es] al riht for to be vengable
 To slen a child, a thyng nat comendable, —
 Demyng off trouthe in his conscience,
 God was nat paied, to moordre innocence.

3184

because he did
 not kill Cyrus;

Astriages caste hym to be wreke
 On Arpagus be fals collusion,
 Because that he his bidding dede breke,
 And was contraire to his entencioun
 Cirus to slen, ageyn[es] al resoun.

3188

3192

so he slew
 Harpagus' son
 out of revenge,

And for that cause Astriages, I reede,
 Off Arpagus leet slen the child in deede.

3196

and had him
roasted and
served up to
his father at
table, a most
lamentable
thing to do.

This to seyne, be ful fals compassyng [p. 127] 3200
And couert moordre, wrouht bi Astriages,
The sone was slayn off Arpagus the kyng,
And afftir rosted, allas, ful causeles,
And sithe presentid, amongis al the pres, 3204
Toforñ his fader, a thyng most lamentable,
With Astriâges as he sat at* table.

When Harpagus
found out this
horrible murder,
he went home in
a rage

But whan this kyng callid Arpagus
Conceyued hath this moordre most terrible, 3208
And how his sone & heir was slay[e]n thus,
In his ire most furious and odible,
In al the haste that it was possible,
He is repaired hom to his houshold, 3212
And al the cas to Cirus he hath told.

and told Cyrus
what had hap-
pened, urging
him to take
vengeance and
telling him that
he was the
lawful heir to
Astyages' king-
dom, and how
his grandfather
had cast him
out to be eaten
by wild beasts.

And how his sone was slay[e]n for his sake,
In the most hatful odious cruelte,
Excityng hym with hym to vndirtake 3216
On this fals moordre auengid for to be,
To hym declaryng off trouthe & equite,
How he was bor[e]n be discent in deede,
As riht[e] heir to regne in Perse & Mede. 3220

To hym declaryng the stori bi and bi,
First off the drem off Astriages,
And how that he be fraude ful falsli
Made his douhter, callid Mundanes, 3224
Poorli be weddid onto Cambises,
Which was his mooder, & how in tendre age
He was out cast to beestis ful sauage.

All things that
God disposes
must come to
pass; and Cyrus
was preordained
to become the
ruler of all Asia.

Be a shepperde and a shepperdesse 3228
Fostred he was in gret[e] pouerte,
And brouht fro beestis out off wildirnesse,
Because God wolde he sholde saued be:
For thilke Lord, which euery-thing may see, 3232
Whan that he hath a thyng aforñ disposid,
Nedis it mut fall & may nat be deposid.

This said[e] Cirus, at his natyuyte,
Ordeyned was be reuolucioun 3236
Off the heuenli speeris, in noumbre thries thre,
(So stood that tyme his constellacioun,)

3206. at] at the B, H 5, P.

3215. odious hatefull H. 3119. How] om. R 3, P.

3233. aforñ] be for H.

That he sholde haue the domynacioun
Ouer al Asie, be influence dyuynes,
Afor[n] figured be spredyng off the vyne.

3240

What may the fraude off sleihty folk auaille,
Innocentis to putte out off ther riht?
Thouh trouthe be hid amongis the poraile,
Hard brouht foorth, & dar nat shewe his liht,
Yit God will ordeyne that the bemys briht
Shal sum o day shewe out his cleernesse,
Maugre all tho that wolde his title oppresse.

3248

What can the
fraud of men
avail to rob
innocents of
their rights?

For this Cirus, as clerkis off hym write,
Was bi the title off his mooder side
Born to be kyng al Asie tenherite,
Al-be his aiel from hym wolde it deuide;
But God, that can for trouthe best prouide,
Hath for Cirus be processe so ordeyned,
That he off Asie the lordshep hath atteyned.

3252

Cyrus was born
to be king of
Asia, and in
spite of Asty-
ages, God's will
prevailed.

Cirus that tyme was growe up weel on lengthe,
Weel proporciownyd off membris & stature,
Wonder delyuer, & passyng off gret strengthe,
Straunge emprises proudli to endure;
And to iupart[e] & putte in auenture
His owne persone, the fame was off hym so,
Was non mor likli wher men sholde haue a-do.

3256

Cyrus grew up
into a strong,
well-built man

And bi the counsail off kyng Arpagus,
Whan this Cirus was weel waxe in age,
With Perciens proude & surquedous,
And Archanytes cruel off corage,
For to recure his rihtful heritage
Be go with Cirus, armed in plate & maile,
With Astriages to holden [a] bataile.

3264

and by Har-
pagus' advice
set out to give
battle to Asty-
ages.

And he ageynward gan to taken heede,
And with hym took[e] many worthi knyht,
With al the puissaunce off the lond off Mede
Hath take the feeld the same dai foorth-ryht,
To disherite Cirus off his ryht.
But God and trouthe was atwen hem tweyne
Egal iuge ther quarel to dareyne.

3268

3272

Astyages took
the field the
same day, with
all the power of
Media,

3276

3241. spredyng] spryngyng H.
3256. up weel on] wele vpon H.
3259. Straunge] Strong H.
3269. a] om. J, P.

but Cyrus won, The feeld ordeyned, & splaid ther baneris,
 On outhr parti ful prouddli on thei sette,
 At thassemblyng lik liouns off ther cheris,
 In the face as thei fersli mette 3280
 With rounde speris, ful sharp[e] grounde & whette,
 • Til that Cirus, off grace mor than noumbre,
 Off his aiel the parti dede encoumbre.

and, pursuing his
 foes, took Asty-
 ages prisoner. This myhti Cirus, this yonge champion, [p. 128] 3284
 Thoruhout the feeld gan such a slauhtre make,
 With his knyhtis as he wente up and down,
 That as the deth his fomen hym forsake.
 Astriages vnder his baner take, 3288
 The feeld venquysshid, for al his fals veynglorie,
 To shewe that riht hath alwey the victorie.

A man may
 purpose a thing
 of malice, but
 it is God who
 disposes, and
 truth always
 wins in the end. A man off malice may a thyng purpose
 Bi a maner froward prouydence; 3292
 But God a-boue can graciousli dispose
 Ageyn such malice to make resistance:
 Men for a while may suffre violence
 And wronges grete, wher-so that thei weende, 3296
 But trouthe alway venquysshith at the eende.

Astyages found
 that his dream
 came true: the
 sleight of man
 is no match for
 God's power. Astriages fond ful sooth his drem;
 Thouh he ageyn it made purueiance
 To haue* depryued Cirus off his rem, 3300
 He was deceyued in his ordynance:
 For wher that God thoruh his myhti puissance
 List for heires iustli to prouide,
 Sleichte in such cas off man, is leid a-side. 3304

So Cyrus re-
 covered the land
 of Media, and
 all Asia rejoiced
 in peace. Maugre the myht[e] off Astriages,
 Cirus on hym made a disconfiture;
 And al Asie reioisshed eek in pes,
 Off verai riht, as was his auenture. 3308
 And be iust tittle he dede also recure
 The lond off Mede, lik as was his fate,
 And into Perse he dede it hool translate.

He was not re-
 vengeful, and
 gave his grand-
 father the fourth
 part of Archania. Ageyn his aiel he was nat vengable, 3312
 Which hadde wrouht to his destruccioun,
 But was to hym benygne and merciabe,
 And grauntid hym, off hool affeccioun,
 The fourte part off the regioun 3316

3300. To haue] Ta B. 3315. graunted] growndid H.

Off Archanye, off which afor I tolde,
Hym to sustenyn in his daies olde.

For kyng Cirus wold[e] nat his lyue
Suffre his aiel, off veray gentillesse,
That men sholde hym fynali depyue
Off kyngli honour, for non onkynd[e]nesse, —
To yeue exauple to pryncis in sothnesse,
Thouh God ha[ue] youe hem power in erthe &
myht,
Thei sholde ay merci medle with the ryht.

3320 nor did he wish
him to be de-
prived of king-
ly honour. Princes
should always
temper their
justice with
mercy.

3324

[¶ Lenvoye.]

NOBLE Princis, *your* eris doth encline,
And considreth in *your* discreciouns,
How dremys shewed binfluence dyuyne
Be nat lik sweuenys, but lik auysiouns,
Or resemblable to reuelaciouns,*
Which thouh men wolde distourbe & make faile,
God wil nat suffre ther malice to preuaile.

3328 Noble Princes,
consider how
dreams shewn
by divine influ-
ence are like
revelations,
which God will
not allow men
to frustrate.

3332

Astriages drempte he sauh a vyne,
Shewed off trouthe and non illusiouns,
From his douhter wombe, riht as lyne,
Spred in Asie ouer the regiouns;
But to disherite be fals collusiouns
Yonge Cirus, the kyng dede his trauaile,
But God nat suffred his malice to preuaile.

3336 Astyages' dream
came true in
spite of all his
efforts to
disinherit
Cyrus.

Pryncis remembreth, ye that in honour shyne,
Vpon this stori in your entenciouns,
And beth weelwillid, wher God list forthre a lyne
Outher to richesse or dominaciouns,
To fauour them to ther promociouns, —
Be nat contrarie in your acquitaile,
Sithe God will suffre no malice to preuaile.

3340 Princes, remem-
ber this story;
and when God is
pleased to ad-
vance a line to
wealth or power
do not oppose
his will.

3344

3317. afor] tofor H.

3327. considre H.

3330. reuelaciouns] reuoluciouns B, J, P, R 3, reuolucyons H 5.

3331. distourbe] distrouble H, distrouble R 3.

3335. lyne] any lyne H.

3344. promyciouns H.

[How Candalus kyng of Lide was made Cokewold / and aftir slayn.]¹

As Bochas sat
writing in his
study, Candaules,
king of
Lydia, came
weeping into his
presence and be-
sought him to
tell the story of
how he was de-
ceived and made
a cuckold by
Gyges, a knight
of his household.

WHIL Iohn Bochas caste his look a-side,
In his studie as he sat writyng, 3348
To his presence cam the kyng off Lide
Callid Candalus, ful pitousli pleynyng,
With salte teris ful lowli besechyng,
That he wolde, tasswagen his greuauce, 3352
His dedli sorwe to putte in remembraunce.
His compleynt was most off onkynd[e]nesse,
For fals deceit, ageyn al skile and riht,
That wher his trust was most off gentillesse, 3356
He mokkid was, for al his gret[e] myht;
For off his hous ther was a certeyn knyht,
Giges callid, thyng shamful to be told,
To speke pleyn Inglissh, made hym a cokold. 3360

But I should not
have used such
a coarse word!
I ought to have
said he had a
horn or that he
was called Cor-
nuto.

Alas, I was nat auysid weel befor,
Oncunnyngli to speke such language;
I sholde ha said, how that he hadde an horn,
Or souht sum tee[r]me with a fair visage 3364
Texcuse my rudnesse off this gret outrage,
As in sum land Cornodo men them call,
And summe afferme how such folk ha[ue] no gall.

It happened
thus: One sum-
mer day the
queen lay
naked on her
bed,

This was the cas: whan Phebus shon [ful]
sheene [p. 129] 3368
The somer sesoun in his ascencioun,
Whan soote braunchis wer clad in newe greene,
Heete inportable hadde domynacioun,
Whan that the queen for recreacioun, 3372
Onprouyded that no man dede hir keepe,
Vpon hir bed lay naked for to sleepe.

and, as scholars
say, there was
no fairer
creature alive;

And, as clerkis off hir beute write,
Ther was a-lyue no fairere creature, 3376
Nor mor excellyng, lik as thei endite,
Off semlynesse, hir stori doth assure:

3350. Candaules P.

3356. That] Til H. 3359. be told] beholde H.

3364. teerme] teeme J, P, term H, terme H 5, tym R 3.

3369. The] This H.

3377. lik] of looke H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 53 verso.

Callid for beute cosyn to Nature,
And worthi eek, yiff I shal nat feyne,
To be comparid to Griselde* or Eleyne.

3380

Kynde in hir forge list nothyng to erre,
Whan she hir wrouhte, bi gret auysynesse,
To make off beute the veray lode-sterre,
And yeue hir fauour, beute & semlynesse;
But for Nature hadde so gret besynesse
To fourme a woman that was so fressh of hewe,
She hadde forgete for to make hir trewe.

3388

for nature
did not blunder
when she
wrought her,
except that she
forgot to make
her true.

Hir eyen wer verai celestiall;
Hir her ontressid, lik Phebus in his speer, —
A thyng rasembling that were inmortal,
So angelik she was off look and cheer,
An exaumpaire off port & off maneer, —
Ther was no lak, sauf Nature, thoruh hir slouth,
Hadde lefft behynde to yeue hir feith & trouthe.

3392

She had
heavenly eyes,
golden hair, an
angelic face and
unexampled
manners; only
nature neglected
to give her
constancy.

And on a day, as she lay slepyng
Naked a-bedde, most goodli on to siht,
Ful onwarli cam Candalus the kyng
Into the chaumbre, wher Titan shon ful bryht,
And shewed hir beute onto his owne knyht,
Off entent he sholde ber witenesse
How she excellid all othir in fairnesse.

3396

That day Can-
daules shewed
her to Gyges,
so that he
could see that
she was more
beautiful than
all other women.

3400

And whan Giges gan in ordre see
Off this queen the gret[e] excellence,
He was enamoured vpon hir beute
Al the while he stood ther in presence,
Gan ymagyne a tresour in silence,
To slen his lord, withoute long tarieng,
Wynne the queen, and afftir regne as kyng.

3404

But Gyges fell
in love with her,
and soon after
killed the king
and married her.

3408

This was the eende, doolful and pitous,
To be remembrid hatful and terrible,
Off this noble worthi Candalus;
For off his trust to moche he was credible
Onto Giges, the traitour most odible,
And yit mor foltissch, wherbi he lost his liff,
Outward to shewe the beute off his wiff.

3412

That was the
end of Canda-
ules, who was a
credulous and
stupid man.

3416

3381. Gresilde B, Grisilde J, P, Grisilde H, Grysilde R 3,
Gresylde H 5.

3385. beute fauour J—beute] om. P. 3391. Immortal H.

3396. day] bedde H. 3400. his] hir H.

Alas that a
queen or princess
should do such
a thing! Their
only excuse is
that Nature
makes them
double.

Thouh she were fair & goodli on to see,
Ther was no trust nor no sekirnesse,
For other hadde as good[e] part as he, —
Giges koude bere theroff witnesse.
Alas, a queen, or any gret pryncesse
Assente sholde hir fame for to trouble,
But yiff Nature excuse hem to be double.

3420

[How what thing kyng Midas touched was golde/
yitt deied he in misery and wrecchidnesse.]¹

Gyges was soon
afterwards
crowned king
of Lydia.

BUT who-so-euer was therwith loth or fayn,
Giges was afftir crownd kyng off Lide,
Whan that his lord was be tresour slayn.
Off hym the surplus Bochas set a-side.

3424

Midas next
appeared, and,
weeping, told
Bochas his
complaint.

And in his studi, as he dede abide,
Ther cam off Frige, Midas the riche kyng,
Told myn auctour his compleynt with wepyng.

3428

Never was there
a richer king.
When he was
born, ants laid
grains of wheat
about his cradle,

For ther was neuer, be conquest nor labour,
No kyng aform that hadde mor richesse,
Nor mor plente off gold nor off tresour.
At whose berthe poetis thus expresse:

3432

A-boute his cradel amptis gan hem* dresse,
Whil he slepte, and gan a-boute hym leyn
A ful gret noumbre off purid whiete greyn.

3436

and diviners
came to
the conclusion
that he would
excel all men in
wealth.

Wherupon, most expert dyuynours,
As thei took heed in ther attendaunce,
Such as wer[e]n best expositours,
Saide it was a tokne off habundaunce,
To haue off richesse al maner suffisaunce,
And concludyng, pleyntli gan to tell,
How he alle other in tresour sholde excell.

3440

3444

It was also said
that Bacchus
granted his
request, that
whatever he
touched would
turn to gold.

Poetis off hym wrot that were ful olde,
How Bachus gaff hym — the myhti God of wyn, —
What he toucheth shal turnen into golde
As good as that which cam out off the myn,
At all assaies to been as pur and fyn.
This request, as writ Ouidius,
Was onto Midas grauntid off Bachus.

3448

3435. hem] hym B. 3437. A] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 53 verso.

He thouhte gold myhte hym most auaile: [p. 130] 3452 But as he could
 What he handlid was gold with touchyng,
 But whan hunger his stomak gan assaile,
 His bred, his mete was cleer gold in shewyng;
 And whan he gan to faile off his fedyng, 3456
 And fond in gold no recour to escape,
 Besouhte Bachus sum remedi to shape. •

Bachus bad hym go bathe in a ryuer
 To wasshe a-way the colour aureat,
 Wher yit is shewed the goldi grauel cleer. 3460
 Which exaumple declareth to ech estat,
 That gold alone maketh men nat fortunat:
 For what may gold or tresour ther auaile, 3464
 Wher men in hunger fynde no vitaile?

Or what is worth* gold, perle or stonys red,
 Grene emeraudis or saphir[e]s ynde,
 Whan men enfamyned ha[ue] no[u]ther greyn nor 3468
 bred,

Nor in such myscheeff vitaile may non fynde
 For to fostre ther nature and ther kynde, —
 A barli loff in such a distresse
 Mor myhte auaile than al worldli richesse! 3472

This knew Midas, & was expert in deede,
 Thouh he off gold hadde so gret plente,
 That with metall he myhte hymself nat feede.
 Which caused hym off necessite 3476
 To considre and cleerli for to see,
 That bred mor vailith for fostryng off nature,
 Than al [the] richesse that men may heer recure.

For which this kyng gan haten al richesse;
 Gold and tresour he hadde eek in disdeyn,
 Lefte his crowne and his roial noblesse,
 And ches to keepe sheep vpon a pleyn. 3480
 Al worldli worshepe was to hym but weyn. 3484
 Off malencolie & froward pouerte,
 Endid his liff in gret aduersite.

3454. gan] did H.

3458. shape] make H.

3461. yit] it P.

3466. worth] worthi B, J, worthy H, H 5.

3478. availith H.

3479. the] *om.* J, P, H 5 — heer] *om.* H.

3484. was] is H.

But as he could
 not eat gold,
 when he became
 hungry he
 begged Bacchus
 to help him,

and, following
 Bacchus's
 advice,
 bathed in a
 river. The
 gravel still
 shines golden
 there.

This only proves
 that a barley
 loaf is some-
 times worth
 more than
 all worldly
 riches,

as Midas learned
 by experience.

As a result he
 began to hate
 all wealth, left
 his throne and
 became a
 shepherd.

His end was
very terrible, for
in his great need
he drank the
blood of a mad-
dened bull, and
became mad
himself and died.

For off ire and inpacience,
Fynally thus with hym it stood:
Furiousli in his gret indigence,
As writ Bochas, how he drank the blood
Off a bole, sauagyne and wood,
With loue enchaufid,* made no delaies,
Most bestiali eendid thus his daies.

3488

3492

[Off Balthasar kyng of Babilone and how Danyel
expowned, Mane, Techel, Phares.]¹

Belsbazzar mis-
used the sacred
vessels of the
temple in Jeru-
salem,

NEXT to Bochas, or that he was war,
As he sat writyng with ful gret labour,
Off Babilon cam grete Baltazar
To declare his sorwe and his langour.
Which had mysusid ful falsli the tresour
And the vesseles brouht fro Ierusalem,
In Babilon cheeff cite off his rewrm.

3496

3500

drinking
wine out of them
at a supper, sur-
rounded by his
concubines and
magicians,

For at a souper with his lordis all,
Whan off the vesselis he drank myhti wyne,
And solemply sat in his roial stall,
And round a-boute all his concubynes,
Philisophres, magiciens and dyuynes,
Ther cam an hand, the Bible doth assure,
And on the wall gan writen this scripture:

3504

when suddenly
a hand wrote
*Mane, Techel,
Phares* in bright
letters on the
wall.

Mane techel phares wreten in his siht,
Thouh he the menyng conceyued neueradeel,
Which on the wall shewed cleer & briht,
Fro whos sentence auailed non appel.
But the prophete, hooli Danyel,
Fulli expownd to Baltazar the kyng
The mysterie off this derk writyng.

3508

3512

3487. Impacience H.

3488. with hym thus H.

3492. enchaufid] eschaufid B, eschaufed J, R 3.

3501. a] om. H.

3503. solempnely H, R 3, solemnely P.

3510. cleer] fayre P.

¹ MS. J leaf 54 recto.

"This woord Mane, pleyntli and nat tarie,
In Latyn tunge betokneth in substaunce,
The daies countid & rekned the noumbrarie
Off thi regnyng & off thi gret substaunce.
And Techel sowneth a weieng in ballaunce,
In tokne thi power & kyngdam be mesure,
God hath hem peised, thei shal no while endure.

The prophet
Daniel explained
3516 to him that
Mane meant in
Latin,
"thy days are
numbered."
Techel, "thy
3520 power and king-
dom are weighed
in the balance."

Phares also betokneth a brekyng,
In Romain tunge, into pecis smale;
For thi power & froward rebellyng
Shal from an hih be brouht into the vale,
This Hooli Writ & no feyned tale:
For whan pryncis wil nat ther liif redresse,
God will onwarli ther surquedie represse.

"Phares
means a break-
ing into small
pieces; for thy
3524 power shall be
brought low.
This is Holy
Writ and no
tale. You were
warned long ago
by the fall of
Nebuchadnezzar
3528 and you took no
heed. Now it
is your turn to
be brought low."

Thou wer be toknys warned longe affor,
Be many exaumples, the story ye may reede,
Bi the fallyng off Nabugodonosor,
And thou theroff took ful litil heede,
The Lord to thanke & haue his name in dreede.
For which thou shalt withynne a litil throwe
Lese sceptre & crowne, & be brouht ful lowe."

3532

[Lenvoye.]¹

¶ Lat pryncis all this story haue in mynde, [p. 131] 3536
And for themsilff[e] notabli prouide,
A[nd] namli thei that be to God onkynde,
Ther concubynes for to sette a-side,
And make vertu for to been ther guide,
Voide lecheri and fals presumpcioun,
Which haue* so many brouht to destruccioun.

Let all princes
remember this
story and put
away their con-
cubines and fol-
low virtue.

3540

Nabugodonosor hadde repentaunce,
And was restorid to his possessiouns;
But God off riht took sodenli vengauce
On Balthasar for his transgressiouns.
Wherefore, ye Pryncis, disposith your resouns,

Nebuchadnezzar
repented, and
3544 was restored to
his throne; but
God took ven-
geance on Bel-
shazzar.

3517. & rekned] *om.* H, R 3, P.

3519. a weieng] a weyen H.

3525. hih] hiht H — an hih] the hye P.

3526. This is J, R 3, P.

3542. haue] han B.

3520. kyngdam & power H.

3529. before H.

¹ No heading in MSS. or P. The Envoy is indicated by an initial.

Afftir your meritis to ha[ue] God merciabie, 3548
For your demeritis to fynden hym vengable.

Wherefore, Prin-
ces, do not quar-
rel with the
church as Bel-
shazzar did, who
drank wine out
of the holy ves-
sels and lost
both his lordship
and his life.

Geyn hooli chirch[e] taketh no quarelis,
But aduertisith in your inward siht;
For Balthasar drank off tho vesselis 3552
Stole fro the temple off verrai force & myht:
He los̄te lordshepe and liff vpon a nyht,
So that the kyngdam off Assiriens
Translatid was to Mede & Persiens. 3556

[How* Cresus & balthasar were venquissed bi
Cirus and the son of Cresus slayn at huntyng of
a boor.]¹

Bochas next saw
Cresus, who
besought him to
tell the story of
his fall.

NEXT to Iohn Bochas, withynne a litil throwe,
Writyng off princis many pitous fate,
He sauh kyng Cresus, with other on þe rowe,
Lowli besechyng his fallyng to translate; 3560
And how Fortune ageyn hym gan debate,
And off his myscheeff, doolful for to reede,
For to descryue anon he gan procede.

He was king of
Lydia and of
many other
kingdoms, and
called the flower
of all chivalry.

For as it is remembrid in writyng, 3564
As God and Kynde list for hym ordeyne,
Off Lide he was gouernour & kyng,
And lordshep hadde, the story cannat feyne,
Off many kyngdam mo than oon or tweyne; 3568
Fame in that tyme so dede hym magnefie,
That he was callid flour off al cheualrie.

Warlike and
abounding in
riches, with
plenty of
soldiers and
many children,

And he was also in his tyme founde
The most expert in werre & in bataile, 3572
And off richesse was the most habounde,
And most excellyng in conquest to preuaile —
Plente off peeple, with roial apparaile,
And with al this, to his gret auantage, 3576
Noumbre off childre tenbelish̄ his lynage.

nothing failed
him, until he
dreamt that his
son Atys was
slain,

In the most hiest off his roial see,
And al was weel & nothyng stood amys,
Yit tamenuse his felicite, 3580
A drem he hadde; & trewli that was thys,

3564. in] by H.

3567, 68 are transposed in H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 54 verso. How] Lo J.

How that his sone, which callid was Athys,
Was take fro hym, & be mortal outrage
Slayn sodenli in his tendre age.

3584

This woful drem dede hym gret distresse
And putte his herte in ful gret disespair,
Stondyng in feer & in gret heuynesse
Because his child, tendre, yong & fair,
Which that was bor[e]n for to been his hair,
Sholde causeles in such[e] myscheeff die,
So as his drem afforn dede specefie.

which put him
in great despair.

3588

Off this processe to declare moor,
How Cresus drem fulfellid was in deede:
From Olympus ther cam a wilde boor,
Most furious & sauagyne off dreede,
With fomy tussches, which faste gan hym speede, 3592
Doun descendyng, & nowher list abide
Til that he cam into the land off Lide,

3592 A wild boar
came down from
Mt. Olympus
into Lydia

And gan destroie ther fruitis & ther vynes,
Wher-euer he cam in any maner place,
Brak the nettis and the stronge lynes
Off the hunteris, that dede at hym enchace;
But vnder support off the kynges grace,
His sone and heir, off whom I spak tofor,
Gat hym licence to huntun at this boor.

and began to
destroy the
3600 crops and defied
the skill of the
hunters,

3604

His fader Cresus deemyng off this cas,
Ther was no cause off dreed in no maner,
Thouh his sone wer present at the chas
With other hunteris such game for to ler:
But ay Fortune with hir double cheer
Is reedi euere bi sum fatal treyne
At such disportis sum myscheef to ordeyne.

whom Atys
joined with his
father's per-
mission. But
3608 Fortune is
always ready to
make mischief.

3612

For oon ther was which hadde gouernaunce
Vpon this child tawaiten and to see,
Chacyng the boor, to saue hym fro myschaunce,
From al damage and aduersite, —
Which many lusti folk off that contre,
With hornys, houndis & sharp speris grounde,
Sekyng the boor til thei han hym founde.

One of the
child's tutors, in
the excitement
of the chase,

3616

3587. ful gret H.

3615. Chacyng] causyng H.

3618. speris] swerdes H.

threw his spear
so wildly that it
missed the boar
and struck Atys,
piercing his
heart.

And as thei gan fersli this boor enchace, [p. 132] 3620
He that was chargid to been the childis guide,
As with his spere he gan the boor manace,
The hed nat entred, but forbi gan to glide,
And on the child, which that stood beside, 3624
The strook alihte, & or he dede aduerte,
The sþeris hed rooff hym thoruh the herte.

When Cræsus
heard about it,
his face looked
like that of a
dead image for
grief.

But off this child, when the deth was kouth,
Told & reportid hooli the manere 3628
How he was slay[e]n in his tendre youth,
Born to been heir onto his fader deere,
Cresus for sorwe chaunged* look & cheere,
And for constreynt off dool, in his visage 3632
He resemblede a verrai ded ymage.

But in time all
sorrows assuage;

But eueri sorwe, be long continuaunce,
At the laste it sumwhat must aswage;
For ther is noon so furious greuaunce, 3636
Nor so mortal importable rage,
But long processe yeueth hym auantage:
I meene as thus, ther is noon so gret a sorwe,
But it muste cese, outhere eue or morwe. 3640

for, as philoso-
phers know,
things that are
violent may not
be eternal;

Philosophres concluden & discerne,
And bi ther resouns recorden in scripture,
Thyng violent may nat been eterne;
Nat in o poynt a-bit noon auenture, 3644
Nor a sorwe alway may nat endure:
For stound[e]lmeel thoruh Fortunys variaunce
Ther folweth ioie afftir gret greuaunce.

and, as there
was no means of
remedying the
cause of Cræsus'
grief, Bochas
wrote no more
about it and
proceeded to tell
of his fall,

The sorwe off Cresus, thouth it wer intollerable, 3648
And at his herte the greuaunce sat ful sore,
Sith that his dool was irrecuperable,
And mene was non his harmys to restore,
Myn auctour Bochas writ off his wo no more, 3652
But off his fall, how that it fill in deede,
To telle the maner forth he doth procede.

saying that first
Belshazzar, who
had been joined
by Cræsus, and
then Cræsus
himself was
overcome by
Cyrus,

And for a while he set his stile a-side,
And his processe in parti he forbar 3656
To speke off Cresus, that was kyng off Lide,
And gan resorte to write off Balthazar,
Ageyn rehersyng: or that he was war,

3626. thoruh] to H, P. 3631. he chaunged B.

3645. may nat alwey H.

How myhti Cirus, off fatal auenture,
Made on hym proudli a disconfiture.

3660

And as it is put in remembraunce,
Off Balthazar to holde up the partie,
Cresus with hym had maad an alliaunce
With al his puissaunce & al his cheualrie,
His liff, his tresour to putte in iupartie,
Sworn in armis as brother onto brother,
Be Cirus venquysshed, the ton afftir the tother.

3664

in spite of
Cræsus'
bravery.
Cræsus was
put in prison

3668

Ther bothe myscheeff no lenger was delaied,
Al-be that Cresus fauht longe in his diffence,
He fynali be Cirus was outraied
And depryued be knyhtli violence, —
Take in the feeld, ther was no resistence,
And rigorously, to his confusioun,
With myhti fetris cast in a derk prisoun.

3672

And mor tencrece his gret aduersite,
A sone off his, tendre & yong off age,
That was dounb from his natyuyte
And neuer spak woord in no maner language —
Cirus comaundyng be furious outrage,
That Cresus sholde, be vengable cruelte,
Ba knyht of Perse in prisoun heuedid be, —

3676

together with
one of his sons
who was dumb.
Cyrus com-
manded a
knight to cut off
Cræsus' head;
but, as he raised
his sword, the
dumb child
spoke and told
him not to slay
a helpless king.

3680

And with his suerd as he gan manace,
Cresus taslayn withoute al reuerence,
The dounb[e] child, ther present in the place,
Which neuer had spoke, thus saide in audience:
"Withdrauh thi strok and do no violence
Onto my lord, thi fame for to confounde,
To slen a kyng that lith in prisoun bounde."

3684

The knyht astonyd, hath his strok forborn,
Gretli abaueid in that derk habitacle,
Which herd a child that neuer spak toforn
A-geyn his suerd to maken an obstacle:
Ran & tolde this merueilous myracle
To myhti Cirus, with eueri circumstaunce,
Hoppyng therbi tattermrid his greuaunce.

3688

At this the
knight was so
abashed that he
ran and told
Cyrus.

3692

3696

3660. fatal] hatefull H.

3677. yong & tendre H. 3686. thus] & H.

3691. abaueid] abasshid H, abashede R 3, abashed P.

But it is very
hard to appease
the malice of a
tyrant,

But wher-as tirantis be set on cruelte,
Ther crokid malice ful hard is to appese,
So indurat is ther iniquite,
That al in vengauce is set ther hertis ese, 3700
Themsilff reioisshyng to seen folk in disese,
Lich as thei wer, in ther froward daunger
Clenli frauçhised fro God and his power.

and cruel Cyrus
had a fire made
and commanded
his men to throw
Croesus into it.

This cruel Cirus, most vengable off desir,[p. 133] 3704
Texecute his fel entent in deede,
Leet make in haste off faget a gret fir,
And gan them kyndle with many colis rede,
And made Cresus, quakyng in his dreede, 3708
For to be take wher-as he lay ful lowe,
And bad men sholde into the fir hym throwe.

However,
Jupiter saw what
was happening
and sent a storm
of rain, which
extinguished the
fire, and Croesus
escaped with
his life.

But Iubiter, which hath this vengauce seyn,
How cruel Cirus with malice was atteynt, 3712
From heuene sente a tempest & a reyn,
That sodenli the horrible fir was queynt;
[And] woful Cresus, with dreedful fir maad feynt,
Escapid is his furious mortal peyne — 3716
God and Fortune for hym list so ordeyne.

Cyrus then be-
gan to have pity
and allowed
Croesus to go
back to Lydia,
but no longer to
be called king.

This auenture, in maner merueilous,
The herte off Cirus gan sumwhat to enbrace,
And caused hym for to been pitous 3720
Ageyn Cresus, & grauntid hym this grace,
To ocupie, whil he hath liff and space,
The lond off Lide; except onli this thyng,
He sholde nat afftir no mor be callid kyng. 3724

Thus the king-
dom of Lydia
came to an end.
Now I will pass
on to Cyrus.

And thus off Lide the kyngdam dede fyne,
Which took his gynnyng off oon Ardisius,
And endured the space off kynges nyne; — 3728
Look who will, the bookis telle thus.
Heroff no mor, but forth onto Cirus
I will proceede, with al my wise* cure
For to translate his woful auenture.

3697. as] om. H. 3706. fagott H.
3715. And] om. J.
3730. wise] vise B.

[How the cruel tiraunt Cirus delited euer in slauhtre
& shedyng of blood and so ended.]¹

H EIR be discent to gret Astriages,
Poorli brouht forth, as maad is menciouⁿ,
And hadde al Asie to his gret ences,
Holdyng that regne be iust successioun
In long quiete withoute rebellioun,
Til tyme he thouhte, in ful froward wise,
The world was smal to staunche his couetise.

3732 Unfortunate in
his youth, he
subsequently
held all Asia
under his do-
minion;

3736

He hadde an etik most contagious
Freyng vpon hym for desir off good,
A dropesie, hatful and furious,
Off froward rage, that made his herte wood,
A woluysh thrust to sheede manys blood,
Which ouerthwertid, be fals malencolie,
His roial corage into tirannye.

3740 but he suffered
from a fever of
bloodthirstiness
that turned his
royalty into
tyranny.

3744

But whan he gan presumptuousli entende
To robbe and reue folk thoruh his pillage,
God & Fortune made hym to descende
Ful sodenli from his roial stage,
Demyng off pride it was a gret vauntage
To wynne londis, off verray force & myht,
Thouh in his conquest ther wer no tittle off ryht.

3748 And when he
began to rob
and pillage,
thinking in
his pride that
might was above
right, God made
him descend
very suddenly
from his throne.

3752

To will he gaff hooli the souerynte,
And aduertisid nothyng to resoun,
But preferrid his sensualite
To haue lordshep & domynacioun
A-boue sad trouthe and discrecioun.
Which causith pryncis from ther estat roiall,
Or thei be war, to haue a sodeyn fall.

He gave free
rein to his will
and preferred
worldly success
to discretion.

3756

For the lordshepe off al Asia
Miht nat suffise to Cirus gredynesse,
But thouhte he wolde conquere Cithia,
And ther werreie tencrece his gret richesse,
Thouh he no tittle hadde off rihtwisnesse,
Sauff a fals-lust; wheroff men sholde ha[ue] routhe,
That will in pryncis sholde oppresse trouthe.

3760 The lordship of
all Asia was not
enough for him,
so he thought
he would con-
quer Scythia.

3764

3733. forth] vp H. 3735. that] þe H.
3741. hatful] ful hatful H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 55 recto.

Excelling all-
other princes in
conquest and
treasure, he was
cruel and
avaricious,

First this Cirus all pryncis dede excell
Bothe in conquest, victorie and bataile, 3768
Off gold & tresour, as bookis off hym tell:
Kyngdamys to wynne he dede most preuaile;
And yit too vicis dede his herte assaile,
* First couetise euere tencrece in good, 3772
With a desir to sheede mennys blood.

and, carried away
by these vices, he
marched on the
kingdom of
Queen Tomyris,
which lies be-
tween the Cas-
pian and the
Black Sea, and
where the peas-
ants have only
fruits of the soil
to eat.

With these too vices he brenneth euer in oon,
That neuer myhte from his herte twynne,
Made a gret arme toward Sceptemtrion, 3776
And cast hym proudli to sette on & begynne,
Scithia, the myhti lond, to wynne,
Queen Thamaris ther regnyng, as I fynde,
Whos kyngdam ioyneth to Ethiope and* Inde. 3780

Toward the parti which is orientall,
The Se off Surrie floweth ful plenteuous
Doun to the Se callid Occidentall,
And southward renneth toward Coucasus. 3784
And folk off Cithie that been laborious,
Which tile the lond, hanat to ther lyuynge
But onli fruitis which from the erthe sprynge.

But the land is
rich in grain and
gold and precious
stones, although
part of it is not
inhabited for fear
of griffons.

The lond off Cithie is riche for the nonys, [p. 134] 3788
For greyn and fruit a lond ful couenable,
Riche off gold, perle and precious stonys,
Riht comodious & wonder delectable;
But a gret parti is nat habitable, 3792
The peepel dreedful to beelde ther mansiouns,
For feer off deth, because off the griffouns.

Tomyris was not
very famous
before Cyrus
began his in-
vasion,

The noble fame nor the hih renoun
Was nat ferr knowe nor Isprad a-boute 3796
Off Thamaris, queen off that regioun,
Nor off hir noblesse, withynne nor withoute,
Till that kyng Cirus, with a ful gret route,
Into Scithia gan hym proudli dresse, 3800
The hardi queen to spoile off hir richesse.

but she started
at once to pre-
pare to resist
him and en-
trusted one third
of her forces to
her son,

But she, hir fame mor to magnefie,
Gan in gret haste with ful riche appaiaile
Ful prudentli assemble hir cheualrie, 3804
And took a feeld, yiff he hir wolde assaile,

3780. kyngdam] contre H — and] in B, J, R 3, P.
3784. Coucasus J, H, cancasus R 3, Caucasus P.
3790. perle] perell R 3. 3791. delitable H.

Redi with hym to haue[n] a bataile.
And off hir meyne, lich as seith my book,
Onto hir sone the thridde part she took.

3808

And gaff hym charge in the same place,
Hymself tacquite that day lik a knyht,
And for to meete Cirus in the face,
And nothyng dreede with hym for to fyht.
But whan kyng Cirus off hym hadde a syht,
Cast hym that day the yong[e] prynce [t]oppresse,
Rather be wilis than manhod or prowess.

3812

telling him to
have no fear. ~
Cyrus however
laid a trap for
him, leaving his
tents filled with
food and drink
and apparently
fleeing with his
army.

First he leet stuffe his large pauilloun
With gret plente off drynkis delectable,
Duyers metis and confeccioun
Round aboute vpon eueri table;
And in his menyng passyng deceyuable,
Lich as he hadde in maner dreedful be,
Took al his hoost & gan anon to fle.

3816

This yonge prynce, off menyng innocent,
Nothyng demyng as be supposaile,
But that Cirus was with his me[y]ne went
And fledde for feer, he durste hym nat assaile.
And whan he fond such plente off vittaile,
He & his knyhtis thoruh mysgouernaunce,
To ete & drynke set al ther plesaunce.

3824

The young
prince and his
knights thought
that Cyrus was
afraid, and
stuffed them-
selves and
guzzled until
they were drunk
and incapable,

3828

Thei hadde off knyhtod lost al the disciplyne,
Forsook[e] Mars and put hym out off siht,
And to Bachus ther hedis gan enclyne,
Gorge vpon gorge till it drouh to nyht.
And proude Cirus cam on hem anon riht
With al his hoost, thei out off ther armure,
On bestial folk made a disconfiture.

3832

at which Cyrus
came down on
them and killed
them all: for, as
wise men say,
there is no re-
sistance in
drunken folk.

3836

Cruel Cirus lefte non a-lyue,
Off hih nor low made non excepcioun,
Thei wer to feeble ageyn his myht to stryue:
For cheeff cause off ther destruccioun
Was dronkenesse, which voideth al resoun;
And wise men rehersen in sentence,
Wher folk be dronke ther is no resistance.

3840

3814. toppresse] oppresse J.

3834. on] vpon H.

When this
massacre was
reported to
Tomyris, she
almost went mad
with rage,

And whan this slauhtre be relacioun
Reported was and brouht to the presence
Off Thamaris, queen off that regioun,
Onto hir herte it dede ful gret offence.
But off ire and gret inpacience,
Seyng hir sone slayn in tendre age,
For sörwe almost she fill into a rage.

3844

3848

but showing no
sign of womanly
weakness
resolved to be
revenged on
Cyrus.

But for al hir woful dedli peyne,
She shewed no tokne off femynyte,
But off prudence hir wepyng gan restreyne,
And caste hir pleynli auengid for to be
Vpon kyng Cirus & on his cruelte.
Sente out meyne tesprien his passage,
Yiff she hym myhte fynde at a-vauntage.

3852

3856

So she feigned
a flight with
her army into
the mountains,
Cyrus pursuing
to take her
among the rocks;

And with hir meyne gan feyne a maner fliht
Vp to the mounteyns, dreedful & terrible;
And Cirus afftir gan haste hym anon riht,
In hope to take hir, yiff it wer possible.
Among which hilles, mor than it is credible,
Been craggi roches, most hidous off entaile,
Pereilous off passage & void off al vitaile.

3860

3864

but having no
guide or drag-
oman and no
supplies, his men
fell into disorder
and all were
slain.

And Cirus ther fill in gret daunger,
Al onpurueied off drogeman or guide;
To fostre his peeple vitaile was non ther,
Erryng as beestis vpon eueri side.
And thei off Scithie gan for hym so prouide,
Wheroff ther queen[e], God wot, was ful fayn,
At gret myscheeff that al his men wer slayn.

3868

His torn and
pierced body was
brought to the
queen,

Non off alle was take to ransoun, [p. 135]
Nor he hymself escapid nat ther boundis,
Such wait was leid to his destruccioun.
And he thoruh perced with many mortal woundis,
On pecis rent, as beris been with houndis,
The queen comaundyng, whan he lay thus totorn,
To hir presence his* bodi to be born.

3872

3876

who first had his
head cut off and
then threw it
into a bath-tub
full of blood
and said:

First she hath chargid to smyte off his hed,
Whan she thus hath the victorie off hym wonne.
And in a bath, that was off blood al red,

3880

3845. to] vn to H.

3866. drougeman H — or] or of J. P.

3869. so for hym H, so for hem R 3 — so] om. P.

3870. ther] the H. 3874. Such] om. H.

3878. his] this B and MSS. except Add. which has his.

She gan it throwe, withynne a litil tonne.
And off despiht riht thus she hath begonne,
Most tirantli in hir woful rage,
To dede Cirus to hauen this language:

3884

"O thou Cirus, that whilom wer so wood
And so thrustleuh in thi tirannye,
Ageyn Nature to sheede manys blood,
So woluyssh was thyen hatful dropisie,
That merci non myhte it modifie,
Thyn etik ioyned, gredi and onstable,
With thrust off slauhtre ay to be vengable!"

3892

It is an horroure in maner for to thynke
So gret a prynce rebuked for to be
Off a woman, manys blood to drynke,
For to disclaundre his roiall maieste.
But gladli euer vengable cruelte
Off riht requereth, with onwar violence
Blood shad for blood iustli to recompence.

3896

"O thou Cyrus,
once so eager
in thy tyranny
to shed men's
blood, so wolfish
in thy hateful
craving that
was tempered by
no mercy."

It is horrible to
think that such
a great prince
was rebuked by
a woman and
compelled to
drink blood; but
it was neverthe-
less a woman
who brought
him to his end.

¶ Off myhti Cirus thymperial noblesse
Was bi a woman venquysshid & bor down;
God made hir chastise his furious woodnesse,
And for toppresse his famous hih renoun:
For wher vengauunce hath dominacioun
In worldli pryncis, pleyntli to deuyse,
With onwar strok God can hem weel chastise.

3900

The eende off Cirus can ber ful weel record,
How God withstondith folk that be vengable;
Lordshepe & mercy, whan thei been at discord,
Riht wil nat suffre ther staat to stonde stable.
And for this Cirus was so onmerciable,
He with onmerci punished was in deede:
Deth quit for deth; loo, heer his fynal meede!

3908

When lordship
and mercy are
at discord in
princes, God
will punish
them.

3912

In slauhtre & blood he dede hym most delite;
For in tho tweyne was his repast in deede.
He fond no mercy his vengauunce to respite
Wher he fond mater any blood to sheede,
Such ioie he hadde be deth to see folk bleede;
And for the siht dede hym so mekil good,
His fatal eende was for to swymme in blood.

3916

Cyrus delighted
in slaughter; he
knew no mercy,
but at the end
he himself swam
in blood.

3920

3888. to] so to J — manys] meynys H.

3912. punysshid H.

There were no
funereal fires at
his burial, no
golden tomb
was ordained
for his shrine;

Loo, heer thexequies off this myhti kyng!
Loo, heer the eende off his estat roiall! —
Ther wer no flawmys nor brondis cleer shynyng
To brenne his bodi with fires funerall,
Nor obseruaunces nor offrynges marciall,
Nor tumbe off gold with stonys riche & fyne
Was non ordeyned that day to make his shryne!

3924

he had no
epitaph, no bells
were rung; no
weepers sobbed
out tragedies;
no one was there
but his enemies,
who threw his
carrion out to
wild beasts.

Epitaphie ther was non rad nor sunge
Be no poete with ther poetries,
Nor off his tryumphes ther was* no belle runge,
Nor no weperis with sobbyng tragedies,—
Non attendaunce, but off his enmyes,
Which off hatrede in ther cruel rage
Cast out his kareyn to beestis most sauage.

3928

3932

Thus end
tyrants.

Loo, heer off Cirus the fynal auenture,
Which off al Asie was whilom emperour!
Now lith he abiect, withoute sepulture,
Off hih ne low he fond no bet fauour.
Loo, heer the fyn off al worldli labour,
Namli off tirantis, which list nat God to dreede,
But set ther lust in slauhtre, & blood to sheede!

3936

3940

¶ Lenvoye.

Noble Princes,
consider the
lamentable
death of Cyrus.

RYHT noble Princis, considreth in your siht
The fyn off Cirus, pitous & lamentable,
How God punsheth off equite & riht
Tirantis echon, cruel and vengable:
For in his siht it is abhomynable,
That a prynce, as philisophres write,
In slauhtre off men sholde hymself delite.

3944

3948

He was a
manly knight
until tyranny
entered his
heart and he
began to delight
in slaughter.

This said[e] Cirus was a ful manli knyht,
In his begynnyng riht famous & notable,
Nature gaff hym semlynnesse & myht;
For in conquest was non seyn mor hable,
Till tyrannye, the serpent deceyuable,
Merciles his corage dede atwite,
In slauhtre off men whan he hym gan delite.

3952

3927. ordeyned] redy H. 3930. was] nas B, J.

3935. fynal] fatall H.

3944. punysshith H, punyshith R 3, punisheth P, punshith J.

Wherefore, ye Princis, remembreth day &
nyht

Tafforce your noblesse & make it perdurable;
To gete you fauour & loue off euery wyht,
Which shal your stasis conserue & keepe stable:

For ther is conquest non so honourable
In gouernauce, as vengauce to respite,
Merci preferring, in slaughtre nat delite.

Wherefore,
Princes, re-
member that no
conquest is
so honourable as
that which pre-
fers mercy to
vengeance.

[p. 136] 3956

3960

[How Amilius for couetise slouh his brothir and
Remus and Romulus norissed by a woluesse.]¹

AFFTIR kyng Cirus, Bochas dede espie
Too worthi brethre, with facis [ful] pitous, 3964
Born be discent to regne in Albanye,
Bothe off o fadir, the story tellith vs.
The ton off hem callid Amylius,
And to remembre the name [eek] off the tother, 3968
Muniter Icallid was his brother.

After Cyrus,
two brothers,
Amilius and
Numitor,
appeared to
Bochas.

Thei hadde a fader, which named was Prochas,
Kyng off that lond, the story doth deuyse.
Afftir whos deth[e], pleyntli this the cas,
Amilius for fals[e] couetise
His brother slouh in ful cruel wise,
That he oniustli, be fals[e] tyrannye,
Miht ha[ue] the kyngdam alone off Albanye.

Their fater was
called Procas,
and on his
death Amilius
slew his brother,
that he
might be sole
possessor of the
kingdom

3972

3976

This Albania be descripcioun,
Lik as Bochas affermeth in certeyn,
Ys a cite nat ferr fro Rome toun,
Set on an hill beside a large pleyn,
The beeldyng statli, riche and weel beseyn,
Stronge Iwallid, with many riche tour,
And Ascanius was first theroff foundour.

of Alba Longa,
a city not far
from Rome,
which had been
founded by
Ascanius and
was named after
its whiteness.

3980

Which callid was in his fundacioun
Albania, for the gret whihtnesse;
Ther kynges afftir be successioun
Named Albanoy, princis off gret noblesse.

3984

And be discent, the story berth witnesse,
Fro kyng Prochas, record on bookis olde,
Cam these too brethre, & Rea, ther suster, tolde.

3988

3964. ful] om. J, P.

3969. Numitor P — his brother] the tothir H.

3970. Procas P. 3977. Albanye H, Albany R 3, P.

3982. wallid H. 3985. Albany H, Albania J, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 56 verso.

Æmilius had a
sister, Rhea,
whom he
compelled,
when very
young, to
become a nun
in the Temple
of Vesta,

Muniter slayn, as maad is mencion,
The kyngdam ocupied be Amilius;
And Rea entred into relegioun,
For to be wymped in that hooli hous
Sacred to Vesta, with virgynys glorious,
Ther for tapide and be contemptatif,
With othre maidnes, duryng al hir liff.

• 3992

3996

so that neither
she nor her de-
scendants should
have any claim
to the kingdom.

And this was doon whil she was yong off age
Bi hir brother, off fals entencioun,
That she sholde ha[ue] no maner heritage,
Nor cleyme no title in that regioun
Off hir kynreede be non occasioun,
But stonde professid to virgynyte
Tofor Vesta, and lyue in chastite.

4000

4004

Yet in spite of
her virginal
chastity, a
miracle came to
pass, and she
conceived
against Nature
(who is helpless
in such cases),
and bore two
sons.

Yit natwithstandyng hir virgynal clenness,
She hath conceyued be natural miracle;
Gan to encrece in hir hoolynesse,
Whos wombe aroos, in Kynde was noon obstacle:
Ageyn such bollyng auaieth no triacle;
But the goddesse for hir so dede ordeyne,
That she attonys hadde sonys tweyne.

4008

Although she
was high
priestess, her
brother cast the
two infants out
to wild beasts.

The temple off Vesta stood in wildirnesse,
Wher Rea hadde hooli the gouernaunce
Off preestli honour doon to the goddesse,
With many straunge vnkouth obseruaunce.
But bi hir brothris mortal ordenaunce,
Hir yonge sonys myhte nat be socourid,
But cast out to beestis to* be deuourid.

4012

4016

They were
rescued and
fostered by a
she-wolf, for,
as Holy Writ
says, God can
keep children
from all harm.

But a she-wolff, which whelpid hadde late,
To yeue hem souke dede hir besynesse,
Be God ordeyned, or be sum heuenli fate,
Them to conserue fro deth in ther distresse.
For Hooli Writ pleynli ber[i]th witnesse,
God can diffende, as it is weel kouth,
Childre fro myscheeff in ther tendre youth.

4020

4024

Æmilius was
furious with his
sister and shut
her up in a
prison, where she
died of grief.

But in this while this said Amilius,
That was ther vnle, as maad is mencion,
Ageyn his suster froward & furious,
Made hir be shet in a ful derk presoun;

4028

And ther compleynnyng the destruccioun
Off hir too childre born to hir repreeff,
For veray sorwe deied at gret myscheeff.

4032

These said[e] childre, deuoid off al refut,
Beside a ryuer lay pitousli crieng,
From al socour naked & destitut,
Except a woluesse vpon hem awaityng,
At whos wombe ful stille thei lay sowkyng,
Onto Nature a thyng contrarious,
Childre to souke off beestis rauynous.

The children
lay crying beside
a river, with no
one but the
wolves to take
care of them;

4036

But he, this Lord off eueri creature, [p. 137]
Riht as hym list[e] can bothe saue & spille;
And beestis which be rage off ther nature,
He can adaunt* & make hem li ful stille, —
Tigres, leouns obeien at his wille.
The same Lord hath maad a fell woluesse
Onto twei childre hir bigges for to dresse.

but God, who
can save or
destroy as he
wills and is
obeyed even
by lions and
tigers, saw
that they
came to no
harm,

4044

And whil this woluesse hadde hem in depos,
Ther cam an heerde callid Faustusl,
Beheeld ther sowkyng & sauh hem lyn ful clos;
Which shepperde was off kyng Amilius,
Cauht up these childre, the story tellith thus,
And brouht hem hom with ful gret dilligence
Onto his wiff, that callid was Laurence.

and they were
found by a shep-
herd, who took
them home to
his wife.

4048

And she for loue dede hir besi peyne
Them to fostre till thei cam to age,
Gaff them sowken off hir brestis tweyne
Fro day to day, off herte and hool corage.
And thei wer callid as in that language,
Afftir the story, the ton off hem Remus,
And the seconde was named Romulus.

Laurence was
her name, and
she cared for
them until they
grew up. One
was called
Remus and the
other Romulus.

4056

Off which[e] brethre, brefli to termyne,
The toun off Rome took his origynall.
Off fals disclaundre first began that lyne,
The roote out souht, ful vicious founde att all,
Clerli remembred for a memoriall,
Ther gynnynge greuh off such incontinence
As clerkis call *incestus* in sentence.

4060

They were the
founders of
Rome, and their
line began with
scandal and
incest,

4064

4040. this] bat is R 3, that P.

4043. adaunt] aduerte B, J, aduert P.

4046. Onto twei] To too H — twei] tweyn H 5, tweine P —
bigges] pappes R 3.

4052. hom] vp H, forth J — ful] om. J.